

UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



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*THE LIFE AND LETTERS  
OF ST. TERESA.*

VOL. I.

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# THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF ST TERESA

BY

HENRY JAMES COLERIDGE

OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

*SECOND EDITION.*



VOLUME THE FIRST

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QUÆ EST ISTA  
QUÆ ASCENDIT DE DESERTO  
DELICHS AFFLUENS  
INNIXA SUPER DILECTUM SUUM

*(Cant. viii. 5).*



## PREFACE.

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THE design of the biography of St. Teresa which is now submitted to the reader, is the same as that of the *Life and Letters of St. Francis Xavier*, which has now been for several years before the public. There are certain of the saints of God of whom that is pre-eminently true, which is true in a certain measure of all those whose lives and characters are such as to present interesting subjects to the student—that is, that they are but imperfectly understood unless their own letters, as well as their more formal works, are largely used by their biographers. The great typical instance of such a Saint is St. Paul himself. Nothing but a deep and familiar acquaintance with his Epistles can qualify any writer to give a fair and full account of his mind and character. It is the same with a number of other saints, of whose letters we happily possess large numbers. But the kind of biography which may thus be produced is as yet wanting in the case of most of these saints, and its composition involves great labour and requires singular judgment. For it is nearly impossible, in the case of many of them, to do as

the storms which were to disturb so great a part of the rest of her life were already in the air, though it happens that this stay of hers in the old convent marks a period at which a break in the narrative may very well be made. On account of the comparative scarcity of letters in this volume, the reader will find less of what is new in this part of the work than in that which is to follow. My object will have been gained if I should have succeeded in enlarging to any extent the knowledge of St. Teresa among English readers. Like other portions of the Catholic Church, we have long been fed upon the "heavenly doctrine" of which it has been the will of God to make her writing the channel. But we have also a special debt to her, on account of the large number of English Catholic ladies who, in the days of persecution, found a home in the communities of her Order abroad, established by their own countrywomen, so many of which have now in turn taken refuge on our own soil, to bring down, as we may fondly hope, the blessing of Heaven on our beloved country.

H. J. C.

*London, Feast of St. Mathias, 1881.*



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## CHAPTER I.

### *Family and Childhood of Teresa.*

MODERN travellers describe the appearance of the native city of St. Teresa as remarkably picturesque. Avila is placed on an isolated hill, amid the lower folds and spurs of the Guadarrama, the chain which separates the valleys of the Douro and the Tagus, on the southern boundary of Old Castile. Its position is very strong, and its girdle of massive walls and towers still remains to protect the only side which nature has left unfortified by ravines, and to add to the security of the rest, and even at the present day gives it the appearance of a town of the fifteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Avila played its part nobly in the long wars which began in the defence of the northern provinces of the peninsula against the Moors, and ended in their subjugation and expulsion from Spain. Its fortifications are said to owe their origin to Raymond of Burgundy, who, in the eleventh century, married Urraca, daughter of Alfonso the Sixth, King of Castile. It was an important place in the Moorish wars, and from the number of cavaliers of noble families who gathered within its walls to the service of their King and their faith, it got the name of

<sup>1</sup> See Plasse, *Souvenirs du Pays de S. Thérèse*, p. 13.

"Avila de Los Caballeros." Its Cathedral itself has something of the appearance of a fortress, but it is also said to be filled with exquisite works of art. The rapid stream Adaja, one of the tributaries of the Douro, runs by the town. The neighbourhood is rocky and even stern, the soil fertile, the air fine and keen. There are blocks of granite about the country, on which in many cases the forms of animals have been rudely cut by the peasants; they are called "Toros di Guisando," from a village where several of these rocks are still to be seen.<sup>2</sup> These granite blocks are associated in a popular proverb with the race of saints, for which the city has become famous since the days of its chivalrous distinction. It is no longer "Avila de Los Caballeros," but "Avila Cantos y Santos"—Avila, stones and saints.

Here, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, lived Don Alfonso Sanchez de Cepeda, opposite the monastery of the Dominicans, in a house which was afterwards made the site of a church, in which the rooms which were connected with the life of his famous daughter were carefully enclosed. The double names given to families in Spain are simply the conjunction of the family names of the fathers and mothers in each case. Alfonso was Sanchez de Cepeda, the latter name being that of his mother's family, Inez de Cepeda y Tordesillas, and his first wife, by whom he had three children, was Catalina del Pezo y Henao. After her death, he married Beatriz de Ahumada y Tapia, who bore him nine children before her early death at the age of thirty-

<sup>2</sup> See Elisée Reclus, *Nouvelle Géographie Universelle*, t. i. p. 699.

three. Of these nine, Teresa was the third child and eldest girl. All the families whose names are united in her own were of distinction among the nobility of Castile. Their fortunes do not seem to have been very large, but their position was good, their character high, and their manners noble and virtuous.

The family coat of arms, which was and still is preserved over the door of the house in which Alfonso lived, bears in two different quarters the lion, the royal arms of Leon, granted to some valiant knights of the family of Cepeda, two lines of which seem to have met in the Saint's grandfather. In one of these quarters the lion is encompassed by eight crosses of St. Andrew, granted in memory of the taking of Baeza from the Moors on St. Andrew's Day, 1227. The shield is surmounted by the crest of the Ahumadas, a tower, out of the turrets of which flames are bursting. The family took its name from the "smoke" of a burning fortress, which some of its members had defended to the last against the Moors, finally escaping through the smoke. Such were the traditions of the families of Alfonso and Beatriz. In going through the list of the brothers of St. Teresa, we are struck by the manly vigour of the family, and also by the evidence which their careers afford of the action of the cause which was already contributing to the gradual decadence of the country, the occupation of so large a part of the best blood of the Spanish race in the military service and enterprise abroad. The cruelties and the plunderings which formed so large a part of the life of the Spaniards in the New World, were enough to spoil

the national character, which had been formed in the chivalrous and religious wars against the Moors. One of the brothers of the first family has left no trace behind him. The eldest, Juan Vasquez de Cepeda, followed the military career. His sister, who became a second mother to Teresa after the death of Beatriz de Ahumada, married Martin de Guzman y Barrientos, and will be frequently mentioned in the history of our Saint. Of St. Teresa's seven full brothers, children, like her, of Beatriz, one alone, Antonio de Ahumada, entered religion. He became a Dominican the same day that she went to the Convent of the Incarnation. The others, Fernando, Rodrigo, Lorenzo, Pedro, Geronimo, and Agustin, were all military adventurers in the New World, and all honourably distinguished. The only other daughter of Beatriz was the youngest of the whole family, Juana. She was young enough to be brought up by her sister in the Convent of the Incarnation. She married Juan de Ovalle Godinez, a gentleman of Salamanca, and was of great assistance to her sister in the foundation of the first convent of her Reform.

St. Teresa was born on Wednesday in Passion Week, March 28, 1515. She was baptized, according to the best authorities, on the following Wednesday, in the parish church of St. John Baptist. It was on the same day that Mass was said for the first time in the new Carmelite Convent of the Incarnation, in which she was to spend so many happy years. We have no details as to her childhood, except such as she gives us herself. In writing and reading of

the early years of St. Teresa, we must remember the circumstances under which we come to know what we do. It is probable that, if any one but herself had left us the most authentic account which we possess of these early days, we should have heard nothing but praise of the bright and graceful girl, open and affectionate in character, the delight of her family and of the whole city. We should have heard of her purity of demeanour, her tender piety, her charity to the poor, her love of prayer, her hatred of deceit, her gentleness, her modesty, her frankness, her playfulness, her strong good sense, her quick intelligence. As it is, we have to gather the beautiful picture of St. Teresa's youth, in great measure, from what she does not say against herself, in great part also from those traits in her character which are evidently not acquired by years, however much they may be developed and perfected by advance in goodness and virtue, as well from what she does tell us and from the few incidents of which we have some account from independent sources. It must also be remembered that her autobiography, as it is sometimes erroneously called, is, in truth, a statement drawn up with the special purpose of giving such an account of herself as may help her directors to judge of the state of her soul, and particularly of her marvellous gifts of prayer. She is, happily, very much given to digressions, but these digressions have usually reference to the main object of her writing, and do not indulge us with many glimpses of the interior of her home and her ordinary life. The details of the portrait which can thus be drawn are not very

numerous, but they are harmonious and individual in character, and they enable us to some extent to imagine what Teresa de Ahumada must have seemed to those who knew and loved her best.

I had a father and mother [she writes] who were devout, and feared God. Our Lord also helped me with His grace. All this would have been enough to make me good if I had not been so wicked. My father was very much given to the reading of good books, and so he had them in Spanish, that his children might read them. These books, and my mother's carefulness to make us say our prayers, and to bring us up devout to our Lady and to certain saints, began to make me think seriously when I was, I think, six or seven years old. It helped me, too, that I never saw my father and mother respect anything but goodness, as they were very good themselves. My father was a man of great charity towards the poor and compassion for the sick, and also for servants; so much so that he never could be persuaded to keep slaves, for he pitied them so much, and a slave belonging to one of his brothers being once in his house, was treated by him with as much tenderness as his own children. He used to say that he could not endure the pain of seeing that she was not free. He was a man of great truthfulness; no one ever heard him swear or speak ill of any one; his life was most pure. My mother also was a woman of great goodness, and her life was spent in great infirmities. She was singularly pure in all her ways. Though possessing great beauty, yet it was never known that she gave reason to suspect that she made any account of it whatever; for, though she was only three-and-thirty years of age when she died, her apparel was already that of a woman advanced in years. She was very calm, and had great sense. The sufferings she went through during her life were grievous, her death most Christian.

We were three sisters and nine brothers ; all, by the mercy of God, resembled their parents in goodness except myself. Though I was the most cherished of my father, and before I began to offend God I think he had some reason—for I am filled with sorrow whenever I think of the good desires with which our Lord inspired me, and what a wretched use I made of them. Besides, my brothers never in any way hindered me in the service of God.<sup>3</sup>

Few things are more beautiful in the Church than the large Christian families, united in the service of God, careful and regular in their mutual duties, and happy in their interchange of affection and confidence, such as that which is here sketched in so few words. We may fairly think that, if St. Teresa could have accused herself of undutifulness, or disobedience, or neglect of her religious practices, or of hard temper, or quarrelsomeness, or slothfulness, we should have this confession made in the place from which these last paragraphs are quoted. When a large family is happy and united, dutiful, and religious, and charitable, and when we have also good reason for thinking that it was by no means deficient in high spirits and vigour of intelligence, we need little more to assure us of the virtues and graces of its members. It may be that the decay of Spain as a great Christian country had already begun before St. Teresa died, but it is clear that the population of which such a family was a fair specimen was sound at heart. The words of the Saint also reveal to us that she was very strongly affected by religious senti-

<sup>3</sup> St. Teresa's *Life*, by herself, c. i. p. 3. We use the translation of Mr. David Lewis, except where it may be otherwise specified.

ments and motives in her youngest years, and that she conceived many very high desires for the service of God. Those who have studied her character most closely in her life and writings, will see no reason for wondering that she was her father's favourite child.

She goes on to tell us of the way in which these religious instincts manifested themselves when she had reached the age of seven. She had a brother, Rodrigo de Cepeda,

—nearly of my own age,<sup>4</sup> and he it was whom I most loved, though I was very fond of all of them, and they of me. He and I used to read the *Lives of the Saints* together. When I read of martyrdom undergone by the saints for the love of God, it struck me that the vision of God was very cheaply purchased, and I had a great desire to die a martyr's death—not out of any love of Him, of which I was unconscious, but that I might more quickly attain to the fruition of those great joys of which I read that they were reserved in Heaven; and I used to discuss with my brother how we could become martyrs. We settled to go together to the land of the Moors, begging our way for the love of God, that we might be beheaded, and our Lord, I believe, had given me courage enough, even at so tender an age, if we could have found the means to proceed. But our greatest difficulty seemed to be our father and mother. It astonished us greatly to find it said in what we were reading that pain and bliss were everlasting. We happened very often to talk about this, and we had a pleasure in repeating frequently, “For ever, ever, ever.” Through the constant uttering of these words our Lord was pleased that I should receive an abiding impression of the way of truth when I was yet a child.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> He was really four years older.

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, i. 4, 5.



The two children set out, thinking, perhaps, that the land of the Moors, of whom they had heard so much as the deadly enemies of their faith and nation, could not be far off. They put up a little stock of food, and then went stealthily out of the Adaja Gate, towards Salamanca, and crossed the bridge.<sup>6</sup> But they soon met a brother of their father's, Francisco Alvarez de Cepeda, who took them home to their mother. They had already been missed, and Doña Beatriz was in fear that they might have fallen into a well, as all her search for them had proved fruitless. There was a little scene when the two culprits were questioned by their young mother as to their escapade, and the historians relate the tradition that Rodrigo, who was by four years the elder of the two, laid the blame on "the little one,"<sup>7</sup> who, as he said, wished to see God, and to die as soon as possible in order that she might do so. As they were thus prevented from becoming martyrs, they set about making themselves hermits. But their hermitages could only be built of small stones, which fell down in a heap as soon as they had been placed one over the other. The orchard in which these little attempts were made has been preserved, and is to be seen as a garden adjoining the fine church and monastery of the Discalced Carmelite Friars, which was built on the spot of the house where the Saint was born and brought up. It is clear that Teresa was a pious child, singularly

<sup>6</sup> A cross, with four columns round it, marks the spot where the children were stopped (Plasse, p. 24).

<sup>7</sup> "La Niña." At this time the only other girl in the family was Maria de Cepeda, daughter of the first wife, and much older than Teresa.

full of religiousness. She gave, she tells us, what alms she could, little though it was. She was fond of retiring to be alone in order to say her prayers, "of which there were a great many," and she was taught by her mother to be very fond of the Rosary. "I used to delight exceedingly," she adds, "when playing with other children, in the building of monasteries, as if we were nuns, and I think wished to be a nun, though not so much as I did to be a martyr or a hermit."<sup>8</sup>

Another anecdote of this time of the childhood of St. Teresa is preserved to us by her biographers, and it is remarkable, as having left an impression of which there are traces even in her mature writings. She had a devotion to a picture of our Lord at the well, talking with the woman of Samaria, and the words of the poor sinner, "Lord, give me of this water," took hold of her heart, so that she was constantly making them into a prayer of her own. She may have known more than the Samaritan woman of the true nature of the water for which she was so constantly asking, but she had to learn far more than she then dreamed of concerning it in her after life, and the image of the water came to be a favourite with her.

The mother of a child like this must have been an interesting person in herself; but we know little more of Doña Beatriz than what we can gather from these anecdotes of her home. She was a constant sufferer, and must have been married very young, as she was only thirty-three when she died, having borne nine children, between some of whom, as in the case of Rodrigo and Teresa, there may

<sup>8</sup> *Life*, i. 6.

have been considerable intervals. St. Teresa tells us that she was fond of reading books of chivalry, which in those days filled the place in the feeding of the imagination which is in our times far more dangerously occupied by the swarms of frivolous and effeminate novels, on which the young of both sexes—and not the young only—waste so much time, to their own degradation both morally and intellectually. As far as we can judge of the books of that time by such works as *Amadis of Gaul* and *Palmerin of England*, works which are exceptionally commended by Cervantes in his account of the ruthless destruction of the library of Don Quixote, they were likely to do far less harm to morals and to the imagination than the ordinary novels of the present time. Don Alfonso did not like this class of book at all, and it was his young wife's only fault that she indulged in it, though not, if we may take her daughter's account of the matter, to any very great and excessive extent. It seems to the daughter that her mother indulged in this sort of reading to relieve herself under her many maladies, and that it never led her to any neglect of her duties, as it is certain it never depraved her heart or sullied her purity. This tender and delicate mother died when St. Teresa was about twelve or thirteen,<sup>9</sup> and her death gave the

<sup>9</sup> St. Teresa herself says she was less than twelve (*Life*, c. i.). But it seems that, writing at such a distance of time, she must have been mistaken as to the date, for her mother's will has been printed in the last edition of her writings, and it is dated in November, 1528. There is therefore either an error in the document itself or in St. Teresa's recollection, as she was born in 1515. But there seems good reason for thinking that St. Teresa's memory, at the time when her accounts of herself were written, was very far from accurate as to dates.

young girl an occasion for an action which evidences her simplicity and straightforward faith almost as much as that attempt to gain the martyr's crown of which we have spoken. There was at Avila a large hospital of Our Lady of Charity, for the housing of the destitute poor and the pilgrims, and here there was a picture of our Lady which seems to have been held in special veneration. Teresa went to this picture, and, as she says, "with many tears I implored her to be my Mother. I did this in my simplicity, and I believe that it was of service to me ; for I have by experience found the Royal Virgin help me whenever I recommended myself to her ; and at last she has brought me back to herself. It distresses me now, when I think of and reflect on that which kept me from being earnest in the good desires with which I began."

Teresa's half-sister, Maria de Cepeda, took the place of Doña Beatriz in the household as far as the care of the younger children was concerned. This arrangement lasted for a few years, till Maria's marriage to Don Martin de Guzman y Barrientos in 1531. But from the time of her mother's death St. Teresa seems to date her own gradual declension in fervour, of which she speaks in language which is very likely to raise misconceptions as to the length to which she allowed herself to go in worldliness and frivolity. She traces the beginning of the evil to her fondness for the books of chivalry of which mention has already been made.

It annoyed my father [she says] so much that we had to be careful he never saw us. I contracted a habit of reading

these books, and this little fault which I observed in my mother was the beginning of lukewarmness in my good desires, and the occasion of my falling away in other respects. I thought there was no harm in it, when I wasted many hours night and day in so vain an occupation, even when I kept it a secret from my father. So completely was I mastered by this passion, that I thought I could never be happy without a new book.<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, we learn from Ribera that Teresa indulged in a taste very common among clever and imaginative girls of the present day—she wrote a romance herself, along with the aid of her dear brother Rodrigo. It would be interesting to know how she managed her knights and ladies and giants and dwarfs, and what were the perilous adventures and trials in which the virtue of her heroes and heroines was proved. We only know that the romance in question was thought remarkably ingenious by those who read it. Still, all who have watched the young know well the dreamy and frivolous state to which their minds are brought by such occupations, which are terrible impediments alike to their intellectual industry and growth and to progress in piety. The dangers which grew out of the neglect of and distaste for spiritual things which are so certain consequences of a habit of reading works of fiction, are dwelt on by the Saint in her account of herself with very great severity. It must be remembered that her confessors bear united witness that she had never stained her soul with a grievous sin, and, as she says herself, she never lost the fear of God. But it is

<sup>10</sup> *Life*, c. ii. 1.

not well in any way to detract from the picture which she draws of herself at this time, after we have made the necessary statement, without which her words might seem to mean more than they do.

I began to make much of dress, to wish to please others by my appearance. I took pains with my hands and my hair, used perfumes, and all vanities within my reach—and they were many, for I was very much given to them. I had no evil intention, because I never wished any one to offend God for me. This fastidiousness of excessive neatness lasted some years, and so did also other practices which I thought then were not at all sinful ; now, I see how wrong all this must have been.<sup>11</sup>

To the end of her days St. Teresa was very fond of cleanliness in everything, and we shall meet this trait of her character more than once in the course of her history. The next head of danger which she mentioned is the company into which circumstances forced her, company not so much bad in itself, as dangerous to a soul which God designed for very high perfection, and for the utmost purity in its devotion to Himself.

I had some cousins ; for into my father's house no other men were allowed an entrance. In this he was very cautious ; and would to God he had been cautious with respect even to them ! for I see now the danger of conversing, at an age when virtue should begin to grow, with persons who, not having themselves learnt as yet the vanity of the world, provoke others to throw themselves into the midst of it. These cousins were nearly of mine own age—a little older perhaps. We were always together, and they

<sup>11</sup> *Life*, c. ii. 2.

had a great affection for me. In everything that gave them pleasure, I kept the conversation alive, listened to the stories of their affections and childish follies ; and, what was still worse, my soul began to give itself up to that which was the cause of all its disorders. If I were to give advice, I would say to parents that they ought to be very careful whom they allow to mix with their children when young, for much mischief thence ensues, and our natural inclinations are unto evil rather than unto good.

So it was with me, for I had a sister much older than myself, from whose singular modesty and goodness I learned nothing, and imbibed every evil from a relative who was often in the house. She was so light and frivolous, that my mother took great pains to keep her away, as if she foresaw the evil I should learn from her ; but she could not succeed, on account of the many reasons for her coming. I was very fond of her company, gossiped and talked with her : for she helped me in all the amusements I liked, and suggested others to me, and communicated to me a taste for her own foolish conversation and vanities.<sup>12</sup>

St. Teresa adds here that till this time she thinks she had not turned away from God in mortal sin, or lost the fear of Him, though she had a greater fear of disgrace in the eyes of the world.

This latter fear had much sway over me, that I never wholly forfeited my good name—and, as to that, there was nothing in the world for which I would have bartered it, and nobody in the world I liked well enough who could have persuaded me to do it. Thus I might have had the strength never to do anything against the honour of God, as I had it by nature not to fail in that wherein I thought the honour of the world consisted, and I never observed

<sup>12</sup> *Life*, c. ii. 3, 4.

that I was failing in many other ways. In vainly seeking after it, I was extremely careful, but in the use of the means necessary for preserving it I was utterly careless.<sup>13</sup>

We are not told who this young lady was whose worldly and light behaviour did Teresa so much harm.

This friendship [she continues] distressed my father and sister exceedingly. They often blamed me for it; but as they could not hinder that person from coming into the house, all their efforts were in vain. . . . The conversation of this person so changed me that no trace was left of my soul's natural disposition to virtue, and I became a reflection of her and of another who was given to the same kind of amusements.<sup>14</sup>

She goes on to say that she is certain that, if at that tender age she had been thrown among good people, she should have persevered in virtue.

For if at that time I had found any one to teach me the fear of God, my soul would have grown strong enough not to fall away. . . . In the beginning, these conversations did me harm—I believe so. The fault was perhaps not hers, but mine; for afterwards my own wickedness was enough to lead me astray, together with the servants about me, whom I found ready enough for all evil. If any one of these had given me good advice, I might have profited by it; but they were blinded by interest, as I was by passion. Still, I was never inclined to much evil—for I hated naturally anything dishonourable—but only to the amusement of a pleasant conversation. The occasion of sin, however, being present, danger was at hand, and I exposed to it my father and brothers. God delivered me

<sup>13</sup> *Life*, c. ii. 3, 4.

<sup>14</sup> *Life*, c. ii. 3, 4.



out of it all, so that I should not be lost, in a manner visibly against my will, yet not so secretly as to allow me to escape without the loss of my good name and the suspicions of my father.<sup>15</sup>

She adds that the space of time during which she was given up to these vanities was about three months. At the end of the same chapter she tells us that there was some excuse for her, as she thinks, in the fact that "the conversation I shared in was with one who, I thought, would do well in the estate of matrimony, and I was told by my confessors, and others also, whom in many points I consulted, used to say, that I was not offending God."<sup>16</sup>

It is not very profitable to attempt to lift the veil which conceals so many of the facts in this story of the early vanities of which St. Teresa accuses herself. It is by no means certain that her words can be stretched so as to imply that she was herself a principal in anything that could ultimately affect her honour in the slightest degree. She listened to the talk, and good-naturedly shared in the affairs in which her foolish friend employed her life, as far as some sort of sympathy went. Perhaps she helped her in some other way, and there may have been a good deal in all that went on which exposed her

<sup>15</sup> *Life*, ii. 7.

<sup>16</sup> This is the translation of this passage of St. Teresa's account of herself, given by her latest and best English translator, Mr. David Lewis, of whose labours the freest and largest use will be made in these pages. Others have understood the words as if St. Teresa meant to say that she conversed or had dealings with a person whom she might ultimately have married. The idea that the affair went as far as a "clandestine engagement" has no foundation in her own words, as it certainly would have had, if there had been any truth in it.

to remark, or at least caused anxiety to her father. It must be remembered that the honour of young ladies was guarded in Spain with the strictest precautions, and that, on the other hand, there were stages of "gallantry" in which young gentlemen occupied themselves which in modern times would be considered very insipid, and as no violation of decorum at all. To receive a message or a present would have been, in a girl like Teresa, a serious lapse from honour. Her words would be amply satisfied, under any supposition, if she accepted, in the most distant and guarded way, the attentions of any one. What she is most severe upon, is that which in after years would strike her most strongly—the carelessness and folly by which she seemed to have put herself in danger of things to which all the time she had a true and solid aversion.

The deliverance of which she speaks came about in the following manner. In 1531, Maria de Cepeda, who since the death of Doña Beatriz had been a second mother to Teresa and the other motherless children, married Don Martin de Guzman y Barrientos. Teresa was too young to be left in charge of her father's house ; she was in her sixteenth year, and her education was not finished. So she was sent to a convent of Augustinian Nuns who received young girls like herself. St. Teresa's account of the matter is that her father, having been anxious about her, took advantage of the opportunity for making this change, when it would seem only natural to do so, and would not necessarily imply any feeling of distrust in her. She had already begun to tire of

the life she was leading, though she speaks of "not having spent quite three months in these vanities" at the time when she was taken to the convent. During the first week she felt dissatisfied and depressed, but after that became much happier than she had been at home. Some attempts were made from without to disturb her peace, but they were foiled, and nothing was permitted to trouble the fresh spring of holiness that was to restore beauty to her soul. She returned by degrees to the fervour she had lost, and the thought and desire of eternity once more took their true position in her mind.

This convent was of the Augustinian Order, and was dedicated to Our Lady of Grace. It had once been a Moorish mosque, and St. Thomas of Villanova is said to have preached in it. There were forty nuns at the time St. Teresa went there, and she says they were very good, very prudent, observant of the rule, and recollected; and they were pleased with her and made much of her. She says: "Though at this time I hated to be a nun, yet I was delighted at the sight of nuns so good." The mistress of the children who were educated in the convent was Doña Maria Briceño, and from her conversation and example the first dawn of a new light entered St. Teresa's soul.

How well she used to speak of God! For she was a person of great discretion and sanctity. I listened to her with delight. I think there never was a time when I was not glad to listen to her. She began by telling me how she came to be a nun through the mere reading of the words of the Gospel, "Many are called, and few are chosen." This

good companionship began to root out the bad habits which bad companionship had formed, and to bring my thoughts back to the desire of eternal things, as well as to banish in some measure the great dislike I had to be a nun, which had been very great, and if I saw any one weep in prayer, or devout in any other way, I envied her very much, for my heart was now so hard I could not shed a tear, even if I read the Passion through. This was a grief to me.

I stayed a year and a half in that convent, and was very much the better for it. I began to say many vocal prayers, and to ask all the nuns to pray for me, that God would place me in that state wherein I was to serve Him ; but for all this, my wish was that I should not be a nun, and that God would not be pleased. At the end of my stay there, I had a greater inclination to be a nun : good thoughts of being one in some other convent came to me from time to time, but left me very soon : nor could I give my mind wholly to it.<sup>17</sup>

When she left the convent it was with a settled resolution of leading a life according to God's will, and an unsettled and half-formed desire of becoming a religious. God had been calling her, but she was not willing to listen, and yet did not entirely close her ear to His voice. She became very ill, and was obliged to return to her father's house. On her recovery she went to stay with her sister, Maria de Cepeda, who, since her marriage, had been living at a place called Castellanos de la Cañada, where her husband had possessed considerable property. On her way thither, Teresa passed a few days at a village four leagues from Avila, named Hortigosa, where

<sup>17</sup> *Life*, c. iii. 1, 2.

lived Don Pedro Sanchez de Cepeda, a brother of her father's. He was a man of more than ordinary goodness; at this time he was a widower, and in his old age left all his possessions and entered into religion. His conversation and the good books he lent her to read gave a fresh impulse to her piety.

Though I did not much like these books [she says] I appeared as if I did; for in giving pleasure to others I have been most particular, though it might be painful to myself—so much so, that what in others might have been a virtue was in me a great fault, because I was often extremely indiscreet.<sup>18</sup>

However, the books did their good work, and she left her uncle's house, "understanding," as she says, "the truth she had heard in her childhood, that all things are as nothing, the world vanity, and passing rapidly away." For three months from this time she kept up a ceaseless conflict with her will, which was strongly inclined to the religious life, but could not decide upon embracing it.

Though I could not bend my will to be a nun [she says], I saw that the religious state was the best and the safest. And thus, by little and little, I resolved to force myself into it. The struggle lasted three months. I used to press this reason against myself: the trials and sufferings of living as a nun cannot be greater than those of Purgatory, and I have well deserved to be in Hell. It is not much to spend the rest of my life as if I were in Purgatory, and then go straight to Heaven—which was what I desired. I was more influenced by fear, I think, than by love, to enter religion.

<sup>18</sup> *Life*, c. iii. 5.

The devil put before me that I could not endure the trials of the religious life because of my delicate nurture. I defended myself against him by alleging the trials which Christ endured, and that it was not much for me to suffer something for His sake ; besides, He would help me to bear it. I endured many temptations during those days. I was subject to fainting-fits, for my health was always weak. I had become by this time fond of good books, and that gave me life. I read the Epistles of St. Jerome, which filled me with so much courage, that I resolved to tell my father of my purpose, a step almost the same as that of taking the habit ; for I was so jealous of my word, that I would never, for any consideration, recede from a promise when once my word had been given.

My father's love for me was so great, that I never could obtain his consent ; nor were the prayers of others, whom I persuaded to speak to him, of any avail. The utmost I could get from him was promising to do as I pleased after his death. I now began to be afraid of myself and of my own weakness, fearing lest I might go back. Conceiving, therefore, that the proposed delay was not good for me, I obtained the desired end in another way, as I shall now relate.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> *Life*, c. iii. 6—8.

## CHAPTER II.

### *The Convent of the Incarnation.*

WE have mentioned that, on the day of St. Teresa's birth, in the year 1515, Mass was said for the first time in a new convent of the Order of Mount Carmel, built by the Duchess of Medina Celi, at some distance outside the city of Avila on the north. The convent had been built in 1513, two years before the time we speak of, but for some unknown reason, the first celebration of the Holy Sacrifice had not taken place till the day just now named. The convent was called the Convent of the Incarnation. It was and is large and magnificent, with that sort of stern magnificence which consists in ample room for cells, oratories, gardens, cloisters, and the like, in all of which nothing but severity and bareness reigns. The gardens were rather carefully kept wildernesses, and abounded with fresh and pure water. The air is said to be very healthy, but the young daughter of Alfonso de Cepeda whose life we are writing did not find it so. It is probable that the fare was hard and scanty, unfit for delicate constitutions like hers. But it was within these walls that her great sanctity was to grow up, not without many a trial, like a flower that forces its way through thorns, and at last fills the whole air

with its fragrance. This convent, though it does not possess the remains of St. Teresa, is yet richer than any other place in the world in sites connected with her life. It possesses the parlours in which she conversed with St. Francis Borja, St. Peter of Alcantara, and with St. John of the Cross. On one occasion when she was speaking with the last-named Saint about God, a nun passed by and found them both in ecstasy, lifted from the ground. It has the room in which Teresa received her mystical transverberation—the piercing of her heart by a fiery dart; it has the two oratories in which she prayed and praised God with her religious Sisters, in one of which is the stall of Prioress, in which she placed the statue of the Blessed Queen of Heaven, “Our Lady of Clemency,” with the keys of the convent in her hands, sitting herself humbly at her feet. There is the “grille” at which she so often received Holy Communion, and close by the spot from which St. John of the Cross, already mentioned, used to address his fervent exhortations to the religious inside the choir. To the thousand loving admirers of St. Teresa, no spot can be more full of interest than this Convent of the Incarnation.

Teresa had in this convent a very dear friend, Juana Suarez, and she appears to have been drawn to think of entering this community rather than any other by this seeming accident. In truth, she had not much choice, unless she determined to leave her native place, or to join the good Augustinian Nuns among whom she had been partially educated. She tells us that she did not like the idea of going there “on account of certain devotional practices



which I understood prevailed there, and which I thought overstrained," and that her friendship for Juana made her wish to enter no convent but hers. A little thing, such as a friendship of this sort, may determine the place where a religious vocation is to be carried out, without being in any sense the cause of that vocation. The Convent of the Incarnation was of the Carmelite Order, as has been said, but at that time the rule was ordinarily practised with many mitigations, which had full Pontifical sanction and in no way prevented very high perfection. The nuns of the Incarnation were famous for their mortification, charity, and obedience, but, as it seems, the inmates of the convent were very numerous—at one time in St. Teresa's life they reached the number of a hundred and eighty—and there was no rule enjoining strict enclosure on the nuns. It seems also that the convent was poor, and consequently often driven, for the support of its members, to the shift of sending some away to stay with their families. Without all these things, as it turned out, the career of St. Teresa would have been impossible, and there is all the difference in the world between the lax and unfaithful observance of a rule which has been solemnly adopted, and the regular observance of a rule which in itself is greatly mitigated. It was to this convent that God guided the steps of Teresa de Ahumada.

It is not known how long a time she passed at her father's house in Avila before visiting her sister in the country, nor how long the contest with her father lasted, after she had told him of her desire to become a nun. It is probable it lasted many months,

as she was always careful of the feelings of others, and would never have resolved to pain and displease him whom she tenderly loved, and who loved her more than his other children, by acting as she did, had she not felt assured that there was no reasonable hope of a change on his part. He was firm in the refusal of his consent to her entering any convent during his lifetime, and Teresa, who had learnt a deep distrust of her power of resisting the world, felt that she must forsake him and disobey his command, in order to fulfil the higher duty of obeying the voice of God in her conscience. It was with so intense a pain that she says she does not think the pain of dying could be greater, that very early on the morning of the 2nd of November, 1533, she left his house for the Convent of the Incarnation. She was not alone, for during the time she had spent in maturing her design she had persuaded one of her brothers also to embrace the religious life, and he went on to the Dominican monastery after leaving her with the Carmelites. "It seemed to me," she says, "as if every bone in my body were wrenched asunder; for, as I had no love of God to destroy my love of father and of kindred, this latter love came upon me with a violence so great, that if our Lord had not been my keeper, my own resolution to go on would have failed me. But He gave me courage to fight against myself, so that I executed my purpose." The nuns received her into the convent, and sent word to her father to let him know where his child was. He came to the convent at once, and consented to the sacrifice he was compelled to make, "offering up his Isaac on

Mount Carmel," and little knowing that the child he was called upon to sacrifice was destined to become the spiritual ancestor of a chosen people.

When I took the habit [St. Teresa says] our Lord at once made me understand how He helps those who do violence to themselves in order to serve Him. No one observed this violence in me, they saw nothing but the greatest good-will. At that moment, because I was entering on that state, I was filled with a joy so great that it has never failed me to this day; and God converted the aridity of my soul into the greatest tenderness. Everything in religion was a delight to me; and it is true that now and then I used to sweep the house during those hours of the day which I had formerly spent on my amusements and my dress, and calling to mind that I was delivered from such follies, I was filled with a new joy that surprised me, nor could I understand whence it came. Whenever I remember this, there is nothing in the world however hard, that if it were proposed to me I would not undertake without any hesitation whatever; for I know now by experience in many things, that if from the first I resolutely persevere in my purpose, even in this life His Majesty rewards it in a way which he only understands who has tried it. When the act is done for God only, it is His will before we begin it that the soul, in order to the increase of its merits, should be afraid, and the greater the fear, if we do but succeed, the greater the reward, and the sweetness thence afterwards resulting. . . . If I were a person who had to advise anybody, I would never counsel any one, to whom good inspirations from time to time may come, to resist them through fear of the difficulty of carrying them into effect; for, if a person lives detached for the love of God only, that is no reason for being afraid of failure, for He is Omnipotent.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, c. iv. 3.

In the year of my novitiate [she says elsewhere] I suffered much uneasiness about things in themselves of no importance ; but I was found fault with very often when I was blameless. I bore it painfully and with imperfection ; I went through it all because of the joy I had in being a nun. When they saw me anxious to be alone, and even weeping over my sins at times, they thought I was discontented, and said so. All religious observances had an attraction for me, but I could not endure any which seemed to make me contemptible. I delighted in being thought well of by others, and was very exact in everything I had to do. All this I thought was a virtue, though it will not serve to exculpate me, because I knew what it was to procure my own satisfaction in everything, and so ignorance does not blot out the blame. There may be some excuse in the fact that the convent was not founded in great perfection. I followed after that which was wrong, and neglected that which was good.<sup>2</sup>

The time of her novitiate was distinguished by one great act of charity, the devotion with which she undertook the care of a nun who was suffering from so distressing an illness that the duty of nursing her was one from which the other Sisters shrank. St. Teresa owns that she is surprised at herself when she considers the spirit in which at that early time she was able to perform this duty, for she was so filled with admiration at the patience of the sufferer that her soul was raised above earthly considerations. It seemed to her that so much virtue would be worth the cost of any suffering, and she prayed that God would not spare her any that she might obtain a similar patience. She tells us that on looking back

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, c. v. 1, 2.

she thinks she was moved to the desire chiefly by the thought which had so much effect on her as a child—the thought of the littleness of any temporal pain as compared with an eternal reward. The prayer was heard, she says, before two years were over, when she became so ill that she thinks she had not less to suffer, though in a different way, than the nun whom she had tended with so much charity.

Little more than this is known of her novitiate. There is a story of a prophecy, of uncertain origin, current in the convent, of how a Saint named Teresa would one day live there; and Ribera tells how our Saint, having heard of this, would laugh about it with another novice of the same name with herself, wondering which of them was to be the Saint foretold. In another part of her Life she tells against herself as one of her early faults that she had a very imperfect knowledge of her Breviary and of her duties in choir, simply, as she says, because she was careless and given to vanities.

I knew the other novices could have taught me, but I never asked them, that they might not know how little I knew. . . . Now that God has opened my eyes a little, even when I know a thing, but yet am very slightly in doubt about it, I ask the children. I have lost neither honour nor credit by it—on the contrary, I believe our Lord has been pleased to strengthen my memory. My singing of the Office was bad, and I felt it much if I had not learnt the part entrusted to me—not because I made mistakes before our Lord, which would have been a virtue, but because I made them before the many nuns who heard me. I was so full of my own reputation that

I was disturbed, and therefore did not sing what I had to sing even so well as I might have done. Afterwards I ventured, when I did not know it very well, to say so. At first I felt it very much; but afterwards I found pleasure in doing it. So when I began to be indifferent about its being known that I could not sing well, it gave me no pain at all, and I sang much better.

By trifles such as these, which are nothing, . . . His Majesty helps us on towards greater things, and so it happened to me in the matter of humility. When I saw that all the nuns except myself were making great progress—I was always myself good for nothing—I used to fold up their mantles when they left the choir. I looked on myself as doing service to angels who had been there praising God. I did so till they—I know not how—found it out, and then I was not a little ashamed because my virtue was not strong enough to bear that they should know of it. But the shame arose, not because I was humble, but because I was afraid they would laugh at me, the matter being so trifling.<sup>3</sup>

This, it must be remembered, is her own account of herself, and we must repeat here the remark which has already been made as to her childhood and youth. If the history of her novitiate had been written by one of her religious Sisters, the colour put on the fact would have been very different without being at all false. We should have been told of her generosity in the observance of her religious exercises, her diligence in prayer, in which she spent many hours, her love of solitude, her meditative manner of reciting her beads, her compunction at the thought of the dangers of the world, and her gratitude to God for having drawn her out of it. She is known to

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, c. xxxi. 26, 27.

have been extremely fond of spiritual books, and to have drawn great profit from them, especially the *Lives of the Saints*. She had already the gift of tears ; she was diligent in all the ceremonies of the choir, asking for penances when she made a slip in any of them, and she practised as much austerity as her health and obedience would allow. Above all, we should have been told of her beautiful and tender charity and humility, how she folded up the nuns' veils, and swept the house during the night, and took a special pleasure in helping her Sisters to light their lamps, to go with them if they had to visit any dark parts of the house, and then accompany them to their cells.

Teresa was professed after a year's novitiate on November 3, 1534.

O Supreme Good and my Rest ! [she exclaims] those graces ought to have been enough which Thou hadst given me hitherto, seeing that Thy compassion and greatness had drawn me through so many windings to a state so secure, to a house where there are so many servants of God, from whom I might learn how I may advance in Thy service. I know not how to go on. When I call to mind the circumstances of my profession, the great resolution and joy with which I made it, and my betrothal to Thee, I cannot speak of it without tears ; and my tears ought to be tears of blood, my heart ought to break, and that would not be much to suffer because of the many offences against Thee which I have committed since that day. It seems to me, O my God, that I did nothing but promise never to keep any of the promises I then made to Thee, but such was not my intention.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, c. iv. 4.

Her profession cost her a great struggle, but she does not mention this in her *Life*, as if a thing so insignificant were altogether lost in the thanksgiving and joy of the thought of the happiness of the event. But writing forty years after it of something she felt a great difficulty in resolving upon, she says that nothing she ever did in her life was so hard—"not even my profession, unless it be leaving my father's house to become a nun;" and Ribera says she never lost the remembrance of what it cost her.

Soon after her profession her health gave way; the suffering she had asked for was granted her.

The change in the habit of life and in my food [she says] were hurtful to my health, and though my happiness was great, that was not enough. The fainting-fits began to be more frequent, and my heart was so seriously affected that every one who saw it was alarmed, and I had also many other ailments. And thus it was I spent the first year, having very bad health, though I do not think I offended God in it much.<sup>5</sup>

At the end of the year, that is, in the autumn of 1535, Don Alfonso, who saw his daughter very often, began to despair of her receiving any benefit from the doctors of Avila, and was anxious that she should have a different treatment. There was no rule of enclosure, and thus Teresa was allowed to comply with his wish of trying for her the effect of the skill of a woman who had much reputation as a doctor, and who lived at Becedas, a village near Avila. Thither, therefore, she went with her father, accompanied by

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, c. iv. 6.



her friend Juana Suarez. As it was thought advisable to postpone the process of treatment until the ensuing spring, the intervening time was passed with Maria de Cepeda and her husband, Martin Guzman, at Castellanos de la Cañada, which was near Becedas. On the way Teresa again visited at Hortigosa her uncle, Pedro de Cepeda, as she had done three years before.

Now, as then, he lent her some books, and amongst them was one by Fray Francisco d'Osuna, a Franciscan, which treated of the practice of prayer. It was called *Tercer Abecedario* (Third Alphabet), and she took it with her to her sister's house.

Though in the first year [she says, speaking, as it evidently seems, of the year of her novitiate] I had read good books—for I would read no others, because I understood now the harm they had done me—I did not know how to make my prayer nor how to recollect myself. I was therefore much pleased with the book, and resolved to follow the way of prayer it described with all my might. And as our Lord had already bestowed upon me the gift of tears, and I found pleasure in reading, I began to spend a certain time in solitude, to go frequently to confession, and make a beginning of this way of prayer with this book for my guide, for I had no master—I mean no confessor—who understood me, though I sought for such a one for twenty years afterwards: which did me much harm, in that I frequently went backward, and might have been even utterly lost—for any how, a director would have helped me to escape the risks I ran of sinning against God. From the very beginning God was most gracious to me.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Life*, c. iv. 8.

The method of prayer which she was taught by the book of this holy Franciscan, was to meditate on some point of the Passion of our Lord, representing Him to herself as present in her own heart. There she entered with our Lord, and considered His sufferings, and the love for us with which they were undergone by Him. It was always a difficulty to her to make much use of the intellect in prayer by way of discourse, and she supplied her own incapacity in this respect by the use of good books, which is one of the means of avoiding the loss of time in prayer which she most constantly recommends. It is clear that these months of comparative solitude were a time of great blessing and progress to her soul. She tells us that she had often the prayer of quiet, of which she speaks so beautifully in the following chapters of her autobiography, and even that of union, though not in the same fulness and abundance as at later periods of her life. But she was often the prey of desolation and aridity, and in this state she had again recourse to the aid of good books. It is clear from her own statement, even as to this time of which she speaks with a certain amount of self-reproach, that she was already highly gifted in her communications with God.

When the month of April had come, Teresa, with her father, sister, and Juana Suarez, went to Becedas, and the treatment was begun, but it was of a violent nature, and entirely unsuited to her constitution. At the end of two months her life was almost worn out with the severity of the remedies and the intense suffering they caused her, and at the end of three

months they were finally abandoned, and she returned to Avila far worse than she had left it. The pain in her heart was greater, she was parched with fever, and prostrated with weakness and exhaustion. "The pains I had were unendurable," she says, "and I was overwhelmed with a most deep sadness, so that I had no rest either day or night; and this was the result of our journey."

During this stay at Becedas we find Teresa occupied in a work always dear to her, the benefit and conversion of others. It was a strange Providence that sent this young, open-hearted, and winning nun to a priest who was more in need of her prayers and of the wholesome influence which she gained over him than she was of his advice and direction. He was a man of middle age, clever, and fond of books, though not very learned in true spiritual lore. It is on occasion of her mention of him that she has made her famous declaration that, when confessors are good men and of correct life, it is better that they should have no learning than just a little, for in the former case they are less likely to trust their own lights and to neglect taking the advice of others who may be truly learned. She complains of her own experience of some who had a little knowledge and a good will, but who treated mortal sins as if they were venial, and venial sins as if they were no sins at all. This confessor took a great liking to Teresa, and showed her great affection. This led to long conversations about God, for Teresa at that time could talk of little else. The charm of her character and the pure beauty of her conversation made the poor man enter

into himself, and at length he avowed to her a bad intimacy which he had kept up for nearly seven years, and which was public enough to cause scandal, though no one ventured to speak to him about it, and though he went on saying Mass. Teresa reproaches herself for having shown him some kind of affectionate interest in return for his confidence in her. It was her character to feel a sort of obligation, to return, in her own open and pure way, any kindness and affection that were shown to her, and so it was with this poor priest. She prevailed on him to break off his dangerous intimacy, and give her a medal which he wore round his neck as a sort of love-charm from the object of his miserable passion. Teresa's language concerning him leads us to see that he was attracted to her by her great purity, and that his reverence for her was sufficient to guard their intimacy from any possible danger. He was helped also, as she tells us, by his great devotion to the Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Lady. His conversion was complete. He could no longer bear even to see the poor creature who had exercised so bad an influence over him. He died just a year after his acquaintance with Teresa began, having lived for several months the life of an exemplary and perfectly virtuous priest.

In July they returned to Avila, and Don Alfonso, almost in despair, had again recourse to the doctors of the town. They all declared her case hopeless, and said that, in addition to her other maladies, she was in a consumption. The prospect of death as a release from her sufferings was rather a comfort than a terror.

She looks upon the patience with which she was able to bear them as a great mercy, and attributes it all to grace. "It was a great help to me," she says, "that I had read the story of Job in the *Morals* of St. Gregory (our Lord seems to have prepared me thereby), and that I had begun the practice of prayer, so that I might bear it all, conforming my will to the will of God. All my conversation was with God. I had those words of Job continually in my thoughts and in my mouth: 'If we have received good things of the hands of our Lord, why should we not receive evil things?' This seemed to give me courage."

Her illness reached a crisis on the feast of the Assumption, when during the night she fell into so deep a trance that she lay for four days as if dead, and those watching round her expected that every moment would be her last. They administered the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, and continually repeated the Creed aloud, but she was beyond hearing what they said. It seemed at last as if she really were dead. Her father alone of all the watchers clung to the belief that she still lived. Mass was said for the repose of her soul at a Carmelite monastery near Avila, and her grave was dug at the Convent of the Incarnation. It remained open for a day and a half, and some nuns were sent to Avila to carry her, as they thought, to her last resting-place. Had it not been for her father's firmness the funeral would have been proceeded with. Whilst she was in this state an accident happened that might in itself have caused her death. Her brother Lorenzo fell asleep one night when he had undertaken to watch

by her apparently lifeless body, and whilst he was sleeping the candle set fire to the bed on which she lay. Happily the smoke awakened him before his sister was burnt.

After four days she came back to life, but sorrowing, because she said she had been in Heaven. The true character of this mysterious trance was afterwards concealed by St. Teresa herself, in her humility, but when she first recovered from it she made no secret of having seen and learnt things beyond natural knowledge. She said she had seen Hell as well as Heaven, that she foresaw the convents she should found and the souls that would be saved by her means, and that after her death, which would be a holy one, her body would be covered with cloth of gold ; which it was, though she died in the midst of the utmost poverty. Afterwards, when these things were referred to, she generally treated them lightly, and said she was ashamed of having said such things before so grave a man as her father. But many trustworthy persons (amongst them Father Dominic Bañes and St. Teresa's youngest sister, Juana de Ahumada) said that she spoke quite seriously to them of having seen these things.

She had been very anxious to prepare for the feast of the Assumption by making her confession, but her father had prevented her, under the idea that it was best to keep her mind calm and unagitated by the thought of death, which this, he thought, would bring vividly before her. When she fell into the trance he was very much distressed at having prevented her obtaining the grace of absolution, and

this added earnestness to his prayers for her life. Her first desire on recovering consciousness was to receive the sacraments, which she did with the utmost devotion.

Her sufferings were very much increased by the effects of the trance, and she continued throughout the autumn and winter in a most painful state of sickness.

By the torture of those days [she says] I was bent together like a coil of ropes, unable to move either arm or foot, or hand or head, any more than if I had been dead, unless others moved me; I could move, however, I think, one finger of my right hand. Then, as to touching me, that was impossible, for I was so bruised that I could not endure it. They used to move me in a sheet, one holding one end and another the other. This lasted till Palm Sunday. The only comfort I had was that if no one came near me my pain frequently ceased; and then because I had a little rest I considered myself well, for I was afraid my patience would fail; and thus I was exceedingly happy when I saw myself free from those pains which were so sharp and constant, though in the cold fits of an intermittent fever which were most violent they were still unendurable. My dislike of food was very great. I was now so anxious to return to my monastery, that I had myself conveyed thither in the state I was in. There they received alive one whom they had waited for as dead; but her body was worse than dead; the sight of it could only give pain. It is impossible to describe my extreme weakness, for I was nothing but bones. I remained in this state, as I have already said, more than eight months, and was paralytic, though getting better, for about three years. I praised God when I began to crawl on my hands and knees.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Life*, c. vi. 2, 3.

Towards Easter of the following year, 1537, she became very anxious to return to her convent, and on Palm Sunday, March 25th, she was taken to it, more dead than alive. There were still two years of intense suffering before her. She was almost completely paralyzed for a long time, and suffered in many other ways ; but her patience still never failed ; she was able to bear everything even with joy, and was resigned to the will of God if she were to be left in that state for ever. "My anxiety about the recovery of my health," she says, "seemed to be grounded on my desire to pray in solitude as I had been taught, for there were no means of doing so in the infirmary. I went to confession most frequently, spoke much about God, and in such a way as to edify every one ; and they all marvelled at the patience which our Lord gave me—for if it had not come from the hand of His Majesty it seemed impossible to endure so great an affliction with so great a joy."

She gives the following account of her progress in virtue after her return to her convent. Her graces were very great, and her faithfulness, perhaps, all but perfect, though she still reproaches herself with her self-indulgence in receiving visits from friends who had been dear to her in the world, and others who were attracted by her great goodness and sweetness of character. These visits, however, could not have been frequent at this time, as she was still paralyzed.

It was a great thing for me to have had the grace of prayer which God had wrought in me ; it enabled me to understand what it is to love Him. In a little while I saw these virtues renewed in me : still they were not strong,



for they were not sufficient to sustain me in justice. I never spoke ill in the slightest degree whatever of any one, for I used to keep most carefully in mind that I ought not to assent to nor say of another anything I should not like to have said of myself. I was extremely careful to keep this resolution on all occasions, and those with whom I conversed became so convinced it was right that they adopted it as a habit. It came to be understood that, where I was, absent persons were safe. I communicated and confessed more frequently still, and desired to do so. I still loved solitude, and preferred to speak of God rather than hold any worldly conversation whatever, and I was most deeply penitent for having offended God. And I remember that very often I did not dare to pray, because I was afraid of that most bitter anguish which I felt for having offended God, dreading it as a great chastisement. This grew upon me afterwards to so great a degree, that I know of no torment wherewith to compare it; and yet it was neither more nor less because of any fear I had at any time, for it came upon me only when I remembered the consolations of our Lord which He gave me in prayer, the great debt I owed Him, and the evil return I made; I could not bear it. I was also extremely angry with myself on account of the many tears I shed for my faults, when I saw how little I had improved, seeing that neither my good resolutions, nor the pains I took, were sufficient to keep me from falling whenever I had the opportunity. I looked on my tears as a delusion; and my faults, therefore, I regarded as the more grievous, because I saw the great goodness of our Lord to me in the shedding of these tears, and together with them such deep compunction. I took care to go to confession as soon as I could; and, as I think, did all that was possible on my part to return to a state of grace. But the whole evil lay in my not thoroughly avoiding the occasions of sin, and in my confessors, who helped me so

little. If they had told me I was travelling along on a dangerous road, and that I was bound to abstain from these conversations, I believe, without any doubt, that the matter would have been remedied, because I could not bear to remain even for one day in mortal sin.<sup>8</sup>

It must be remembered, in reading language of this kind, that St. Teresa is ingenious, if we may say so, in laying traps for those readers who may be ready to interpret her words as confessions of grievous sin. It is as certain as a thing of that kind can be, from the testimony of her confessors and others, as well as from her own words rightly understood, that she never in her whole life was guilty of mortal sin. Nor is it reasonable to suppose that what she here calls the occasions of sin, and which undoubtedly were faulty habits, in that they kept her back from that perfect union and single occupation with God to which He called her, were, in the ordinary sense of the words, conversations in themselves evil. We shall see more of the truth of this as we go on. Teresa here anticipates, for she has not yet told us of her recovery of health, which must certainly have preceded in point of time any great indulgence on her part in the matter of visits. She was much sought for by visitors, and the access to the convent parlours was not made difficult in her case. It was thought, no doubt, as it is thought in a thousand cases at the present time, without half the excuse that might be alleged in hers, that persons from outside might gain much spiritual good from conver-

<sup>8</sup> *Life*, c. vii. 4, 6.

sation with such a soul as Teresa. But these visits interfered with the heavenly and seraphic purity of her attention to God, and on this account, at least, they were infidelities on her part, as far as she was at liberty to refuse them, and as far as she clung to them. Her confessors probably looked at the case in the abstract, and did not perceive that God was leading Teresa to a very peculiar state of perfection, and had great designs upon her. It is remarkable that we nowhere meet in her accounts of herself, anything like the modern practice of direction by religious Superiors in the case of nuns. In this respect her life contrasts curiously with the life, for instance, of Margaret Mary Alacoque, whose lot it was to be either greatly tried or helped by her religious Superior. We must now proceed to the account which Teresa gives us of her final cure, by the intercession of the great Saint of whose devotion she became, in a very true sense, the apostle in the modern Church.

As time went on a very slight improvement took place in her health, but she was still almost entirely paralyzed. About two years after her return to the convent the desire of recovery, that she might use her health for God's service, grew strongly upon her.

When [she says] I saw how helpless I was through paralysis, being still so young, and how little the physicians of this world had done for me, I determined to ask those of Heaven to heal me, for I wished much to be well, though I bore my illness with great joy. . . . I began by having Masses and prayers said for my intention—prayers that were highly sanctioned, for I never liked those other devotions, which

some people, especially women, make use of, with a ceremoniousness to me intolerable, but which move them to be devout. . . . I took for my patron and lord the glorious St. Joseph, and recommended myself earnestly to him. I saw clearly that both out of this my present trouble, and out of others of greater importance relating to my honour and the loss of my soul, this my father and lord delivered me and rendered me greater services than I knew how to ask for. I cannot call to mind that I have ever asked him at any time for anything which he has not granted; and I am filled with amazement when I consider the great favours which God has given me through this blessed Saint, the dangers from which he has delivered me, both of body and of soul. To other saints our Lord seems to have given grace to succour men in some special necessity, but to this glorious Saint, I know by experience, to help us in all, and our Lord would have us understand that as He was Himself subject to him upon earth—for St. Joseph had the title of father, and was His guardian and could command Him—so now in Heaven He performs all his petitions. . . .

I used to keep his feast with all the solemnity I could, but with more vanity than spirituality, seeking rather too much splendour and effect, and yet with good intentions. I had this evil in me, that if our Lord gave me grace to do any good, that good became full of imperfections and of many faults; but as for doing wrong, the indulgence of curiosity and vanity, I was very skilful and active therein. Our Lord forgive me! Would that I could persuade all men to be devout to this glorious Saint, for I know by long experience what blessing he can obtain for us from God. I have never known any one who was really devout to him, and who honoured him by particular services, who did not visibly grow more and more in virtue; for he helps in a special way those souls who commend themselves to him.

It is now some years since I have always, on his feast, asked him for something, and I always have it. If the petition be in any way amiss, he directs it aright for my greater good. . . . I ask, for the love of God, that he who does not believe me will make the trial for himself—when he will see by experience the great good that results from commending oneself to this glorious Patriarch, and being devout to him. Those who give themselves to prayer should in a special manner have always a devotion to St. Joseph, for I know not how any man can think of the Queen of Angels, during the time that she suffered so much with the Infant Jesus, without giving thanks to St. Joseph for the services he rendered them then. He who cannot find any one to teach him how to pray, let him take this glorious Saint for his master, and he will not wander out of the way.<sup>9</sup>

She adds that St. Joseph was like himself when he made her able to rise up and walk, no longer a paralytic, “and I too am like myself when I make so bad a use of this grace.”

The whole Church owes a debt of gratitude to St. Teresa, because she was God’s instrument for propagating the special devotion to St. Joseph which has become so wide a means of grace in our day. It is very doubtful whether, before her time, any church had been dedicated to his honour, but St. Teresa dedicated to him the first convent of her Reform, as well as all but five of her seventeen later foundations. By the end of the eighteenth century, one hundred and fifty churches of the Order of Mount Carmel alone were dedicated to his honour, and the other Orders were not slow in following the

<sup>9</sup> *Life*, c. vi. 9—12.

example set them by Mount Carmel, which, in the words of Benedict XIV., "had, according to the opinion of the learned, been the means of bringing from the East to the West the laudable custom of giving solemn worship to St. Joseph." The cure which she thus obtained through the intercession of this Saint took place in 1539

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### CHAPTER III.

#### *A turning-point in life.*

AFTER St. Teresa's health was thus only partially restored—for she was never really strong—some imperfections crept upon her, and led her to giving up the habit of mental prayer, a neglect which she calls the most dangerous temptation of her life. The rule of the Convent of the Incarnation, though exemplary in matters of real importance, allowed many relaxations in points of minor detail. Some of these seemed called for by the exigences of the case, for the convent was poor and the community very large (the number of nuns was at this time one hundred and eighty). Several things therefore were allowed which would have been avoided had they not wanted money. Girls were received into the convent as boarders, and the nuns were permitted to pay frequent visits to their friends in the world. No restriction was placed upon the visits they received, and St. Teresa being what she was, full of charm of

manner and liveliness of mind, with the freshness of youth softened by suffering, and still more by the touch of heavenly grace and piety, was loved by many friends outside the convent walls.

She was also held in great esteem within the convent, and she speaks of the good opinion the nuns had of her as if it were entirely undeserved, and as though it could hardly have existed unless she had pretended to a goodness she did not possess, or had wilfully laid herself out to deceive them in the matter. The great humility and the great sincerity with which she writes place her sometimes almost in a dilemma, as the desire to make always the worst of herself leads her to accuse herself of faulty actions or motives to which she may have felt a temptation, and then she is obliged to say that, as far as she knows, she never did offend God in this way. Thus as to the good esteem in which she was held she says :

I deserved to be with devils, and was deceiving those about me, because I made an outward show of goodness ; for, with my cunning, I so managed matters that all had a good opinion of me ; and yet I did not seek this deliberately by simulating devotion, for in all that relates to hypocrisy and ostentation—glory be to God !—I do not remember that I ever offended Him, as far as I know. The very first movements herein gave me such pain that the devil would depart from me with loss, and the gain remained with me ; and thus, accordingly, he never tempted me much in this way. Perhaps, however, if God had permitted Satan to tempt me as sharply herein as he tempted me in other things, I should have fallen also into this, but His Majesty has preserved me until now. May He be blessed for

evermore! It was rather a heavy affliction to me that I should be thought so well of, for I knew my own secret. . . .

The reason why they thought I was not so wicked was this: They saw that I, who was so young and exposed to so many occasions of sin, withdrew myself so often into solitude for prayer, read much, spoke of God, that I liked to have an oratory of my own and furnish it with objects of devotion, that I spoke ill of no one, and other things of the same kind in me which have the appearance of virtue. Yet all the while—I was so vain—I knew how to procure respect for myself by doing those things which in the world are usually regarded with respect. In consequence of this they gave me as much liberty as they did to the oldest nuns, and even more, and had great confidence in me; for as to taking any liberty by myself or doing anything without leave, such as conversing through the door, or in secret, or by night, I do not think I could have brought myself to speak with anybody in the monastery in that way, and I never did it, for our Lord held me back.<sup>1</sup>

Soon after her return to the convent she began to find that her conversations with friends from without were bad for her soul, but she tried to persuade herself that, as in the case of many of the nuns the visits they received had no ill effect upon the interior regularity of their lives, it would be the same with her. Once she received a supernatural warning, which, partly from ignorance of its true nature, she did not profit by as she might have done. It was in the year 1537, when she was twenty-two, that, in the midst of a conversation in which she was taking a special pleasure, our Lord appeared to her, as she herself relates.

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, c. vii. 2—4.



I was once with a person with whom I had but lately formed an acquaintance, when our Lord was pleased to show me that these friendships were not good for me; to warn me also, and in my blindness, which was so great, to give me light. Christ stood before me grave and stern, leading me to understand what in my conduct was offensive to Him. I saw Him with the eyes of the soul more distinctly than I could have seen Him with the eyes of the body. . . . I was greatly astonished and disturbed, and resolved not to see that person again.<sup>2</sup>

As to the effect of this vision she says :

It did me much harm that I did not then know it was possible to see anything otherwise than with the eyes of the body. So did Satan too, in that he helped me to think so; he made me understand it to be impossible, and suggested that I had imagined the vision—that it might be Satan himself, and other suppositions of the same kind. For all this the impression remained with me that the vision had been from God, and not an imagination; but, as it was not to my liking, I forced myself to lie to myself, and as I did not dare to discuss the matter with any one, and as great importunity was used, I went back to my former conversation with the same person, and with others also, at different times. . . . I spent many years in the pestilent amusement, for it never appeared to me, when I was engaged in it, to be so bad as it really was, though at times I saw clearly it was not good.<sup>3</sup>

She tells us, in the same place, that on another occasion, when she was conversing with this same lady, in the company of others, they all saw a great toad crawling towards them, much faster than is natural to that animal. Teresa looked on it as a

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, c. vii. 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, c. viii. 12.

warning, for it was very unlike a merely natural occurrence. It made a great impression on her, and she says she never forgot it. Nevertheless she continued her dissipating intercourse.

One of the older nuns of the convent, a relation of St. Teresa, used frequently to warn her of her danger, "but," the Saint says, "I not only did not listen to her, but was even offended, thinking she was scandalized without cause."

"Thus," she continues, "I went on, from pastime to pastime, and from vanity to vanity, and from one occasion of sin to another, until I was so distracted by many vanities, that I was ashamed to draw near to God in an act of such special friendship as that of prayer." So in 1541, for a few months she left off the habit of mental prayer, contenting herself with the vocal prayers prescribed by the rule of the Order.

She tells us that before this time she was eager to induce others as well as herself to practise mental prayer. She speaks of this as a temptation of beginners in this holy exercise, but confesses that in her own case it had good results. She thought, she says, that in this life there could not be a greater good than prayer, and, loving her father as much as she did, it is not wonderful that she should have tried to convert him to the practice. She gave him books for the purpose, and he became a great proficient. It took such a hold on him, that for the five or six last years of his life he arrived at a high state of prayer, and was supported by it under many great trials which befell him. He used to come and talk with his child on the things of God. As time went

on, she tells us that she herself became less and less fervent, and persuaded herself that, in her state of dissipation, it was unfit for her to continue this blessed practice. After a year or more of this false humility, she could not bear that her father should think that she still continued her prayer. She says that she pleaded her infirmities as an excuse, and as we know how perfect was her sincerity in ordinary matters, it is not very easy to believe that there was nothing at all in the pretext which she alleged to her father. At the time when she wrote this part of her account of herself, she had been for twenty years so sick every morning as to be unable to take any food till past mid-day, and sometimes still later. When her directors bade her go more frequently to Communion, she used to force on this sickness herself at night, in order, it seems, to be able to go to Communion. She says also that she was never free from great pain, sometimes very acute about the heart, though her fainting-fits became comparatively rare as time went on. At the time of which we are speaking, when she gave up prayer for a year or more, she had still to suffer from her paralysis, and was constantly attacked by fever.

Her father, the soul of truthfulness, easily accepted her excuses, when she told him that it was enough for her strength to attend to her choir duties. But she adds, writing of it later :

I saw clearly that this was no excuse whatever ; neither, however, was it a sufficient reason for giving up a practice which does not require, of necessity, bodily strength, but only love and a habit thereof ; for our Lord always furnishes

an opportunity for it, if we but seek it. I say always ; for though there may be times, as in illness, and from other causes, when we cannot be much alone, yet it never can be but that there must be opportunities when our strength is sufficient for the purpose ; and in sickness itself, and amidst other hindrances, true prayer consists, when the soul loves, in offering up its burden, and in thinking of Him for Whom it suffers, and in the resignation of the will, and in a thousand ways which then present themselves. . . . With a little care, we may find great blessings on those occasions when our Lord, by means of afflictions, deprives us of time for prayer ; and so I found it when I had a good conscience. But my father, having that opinion of me that he had, and because of the love he bore me, believed all I told him ; moreover, he was sorry for me ; and as he had now risen to great heights of prayer himself, he never remained with me long ; for when he had seen me, he went his way, saying that he was wasting his time. As I was wasting it in other vanities, I cared little about this.<sup>4</sup>

The time was now to come when she was to lose the constant help and consolation which she had in this good and most loving father. We have not facts and details enough to enable us to draw a picture of the state of the family of Alfonso de Cepeda after Teresa left her home. We know that she had her younger sister, Juana, to educate in the convent with her, and it is probable that the brothers did not linger long at home before entering on their careers in the New World. Alfonso may have been almost a lonely man at the time of his last illness, which was short. The manner in which Teresa speaks about his last days seems to imply that there were others of the

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, c. vii. 18, 20.

family about him at the time, and perhaps Juana had not yet married.

I went to nurse him, being [she says] more sick in spirit than he was in body, owing to my many vanities—though not, as far as I know, to the extent of being in mortal sin—through the whole of that wretched time of which I am speaking: for, if I knew myself to be in mortal sin, I could not have continued in it on any account. I suffered much myself during his illness. I believe I rendered him some service in return for what he had suffered in mine. Though I was very ill, I did violence to myself, and though in losing him I was to lose all the comfort and good of my life—all this he was to me—I did not betray my sorrow, but concealed it till he was dead, as if I felt none. It seemed as if my very soul were wrenched when I saw him at the point of death, my love for him was so deep.

It was a matter for which we ought to praise our Lord—the death he died, and the desire he had to die. So also was the advice he gave us after the last anointing, how he charged us to recommend him to God, and to pray for mercy for him, how he bade us serve God always, and consider how all things come to an end. He told us, with tears, how sorry he was that he had not served God himself, for he wished he was a friar—I mean, that he had been one in the strictest Order that is. I have a most assured conviction that our Lord, some fifteen days before, had revealed to him that he was not to live: for, up to that time, though very ill, he did not think so; but now, though he was somewhat better, and the physicians said so, he gave no heed to them, but employed himself in the ordering of his soul. His chief suffering consisted in a most acute pain of the shoulders, which never left him; it was so sharp at times that it put him to

great torture. I said to him, that as he had so great a devotion to our Lord carrying His Cross on His shoulders, he should now think that His Majesty wished him to feel somewhat of that pain which He then suffered Himself. This so comforted him, that I do not think I heard him complain afterwards.

He remained three days without consciousness ; but on the day he died our Lord restored him so completely that we were astonished ; he preserved his understanding to the last, for in the middle of the Creed, which he repeated himself, he died. He lay there like an angel. Such he seemed to me, if I may say so, both in soul and disposition—he was very good.<sup>5</sup>

The true turning-points, even in great lives, are not always easily recognized. Some silent unnamed influence has often been the cause of a direction of the soul into some new current, or of its deliverance from some impediment which was keeping it back, and of the removal of which there seemed no hope. It may possibly be, that when all things come to be known, it may be seen that the death of Alfonso de Cepeda was the true turning-point in the life of his famous daughter. She had been the occasion to him of the greatest sacrifice he had ever to make, when he allowed her to remain in the Convent of the Incarnation. She owed her life, as it seems, to his resolute persistence in hope that she might recover from her great trance, which seemed, to all but him, the sleep of death. She had taught him to practise mental prayer, and now he had passed to Heaven, as his confessor did not hesitate to say, straight from his bed of sickness. Incidentally, her attendance on

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, c. vii. 22—25.

his last hours procured her the great advantage, for the time, of intercourse with this holy man, Father Vicente Baron, of the Dominican Order. He had been Alfonso's confessor for some years, and spoke of him as of a man of singular purity of conscience. He took seriously in hand the improvement of the daughter, the wonderfully attractive nun whose acquaintance he had made while she was waiting on her father with so much tender charity. He made her go to Communion once a fortnight—a practice which, in those days, seems to have been unusual, even in nuns. Then she began, having made him her confessor for the time, to speak to him about her prayer. He bade her never to omit it, and from this time she persevered in the holy practice, even though she could not at once cut off all that she speaks of as the occasion of her sins. It may well be thought that Alfonso de Cepeda was not without his part in this happy change. The practice of mental prayer was the foundation of the whole of the life of St. Teresa. It was not only that, without it, she might have sunk back into a state of tepidity worse than any that she has described in her self-accusation. It was in the providence of God that the questionings and troubles which she had to undergo on account of her prayer, were to be the means of bringing her into contact with the great saints who were to help her the most, and with the directors from whom she was to reap the greatest benefits to her soul. A great part of her providential mission in the Church was that she was to be the apostle and doctor, so to speak, of mental prayer, as also of the devotion to

St. Joseph, and the reformer of the Order of Mount Carmel. All this was at stake at the time when Alfonso de Cepeda died, and we cannot doubt that the prayers of that holy father availed much in helping his most beloved child just at this crisis of her career.

This, then, was the beginning, for henceforward there was no going back. During thirteen years from this time St. Teresa's life passed uneventfully away, no outward circumstances varied its even tenour, no crises marked its spiritual progress ; it was a time of long steady struggle on her part, of co-operation with grace against the resistance of nature. It was a stormy sea, as she says herself, on which she rose and fell, and fell and rose, suffered and was consoled, was weary at times and then refreshed, but prayed always, and thus came into port at last. The world was not yet wholly dead within her ; it still held her captive to some extent, and the contradiction between things so opposed as the joys and pleasures of sense and the life of the spirit was the cause of a great deal of unhappiness. She understood and felt that she was in bondage, but could not extricate herself ; she says she wished to live—that is, to live the true life—but saw she was not living, but rather wrestling with the shadow of death.

Oh, that I knew how to describe the captivity of my soul in those days [she exclaims]. I understood perfectly that I was in captivity, but I could not understand the nature of it—neither could I entirely believe that these things, which my confessors did not make so much of, were so wrong as in my soul I felt them to be. One of them—



I had gone to him with a scruple—told me, that even if I were raised to high contemplation, these occasions and conversations were not unfitting for me. This was towards the end, when, by the grace of God, I was withdrawing more and more from these great dangers, but not wholly from the occasions of them. . . . I am sorry for my poor soul because of its great sufferings, and the little help it had from any one except God, and for the wide door that man opened for it that it might go forth to its pastimes and pleasures.<sup>6</sup>

In another place she says :

My life became most wretched, because I learned in prayer more and more of my faults. On the one side God was calling me, on the other I was following the world ; all the things of God gave me great pleasure ; and I was a prisoner to the things of the world. It seemed to me as if I wished to reconcile two contradictions, so much at variance one with another are the life of the spirit and the joy and pleasures and amusements of sense. I suffered much in prayer, for the spirit was slave, and not master, and I was not able to shut up myself within myself—that was my whole method of prayer—without shutting up with me a thousand vanities at the same time.

We find her adding some details as to the subjects on which she ordinarily meditated, under all these trials and conflicts.

I do not understand what there can be to make them afraid who are afraid to begin mental prayer, nor do I know what it is they dread. The devil does well to bring this fear upon us, that he may really beset us ; if, by putting me in fear, he can make me cease from thinking of my offences against God, of the great debt I owe Him, of the existence of Heaven and Hell, and of the great sorrows and trials

<sup>6</sup> *Life*, c. viii. 15.

He underwent for me. That was all my prayer, and had been, when I was in this dangerous state, and it was on those subjects I dwelt whenever I could, and very often I was more occupied with the wish to see the end of the time I had appointed for myself to spend in prayer, and in watching the hour-glass, than with other thoughts that were good. If a sharp penance were laid upon me, I know of none that I would not very often have willingly undertaken rather than prepare myself for prayer by self-recollection. And certainly the violence with which Satan assailed me was so irresistible, or my evil habits were so strong, that I did not betake myself to prayer, and the sadness I felt on entering the oratory was so great, that it required all the courage I had to force myself in. They say of me that my courage is not slight, and it is known that God has given me courage beyond that of a woman; but I have made a bad use of it. In the end, our Lord came to my help, and then, when I had done this violence to myself, I found greater peace and joy than I sometimes had when I had a desire to pray.<sup>7</sup>

The tenderness of her soul is unconsciously revealed by what she says of the effect which sermons had on her at this time, when she was struggling, under much self-reproach, to free herself from the chains which still held her down, and which, in the opinion of her confessors, were no chains at all.

Then there was the torture of sermons, and that not a slight one; for I was very fond of them. If I heard any one preach well and with unction, I felt, without my seeking it, a particular affection for him, neither do I know whence it came. Thus, no sermon seemed to me so bad but that I listened to it with pleasure, though, according to others

<sup>7</sup> *Life*, c. viii. 10.

who heard it, the preaching was not good. If it was a good sermon, it was to me a most special refreshment. To speak of God, or to hear Him spoken of, never wearied me. I am speaking of the time after I gave myself to prayer. At one time I had great comfort in sermons, at another they distressed me, because they made me feel that I was very far from being what I ought to have been.<sup>8</sup>

“My soul was now grown weary,” she says ; and the reward of her perseverance was so near at hand, that this weariness may well have been like the darkness of the night that is deepest before dawn.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### *Perfect Conversion.*

WE have hitherto followed, with more or less of closeness, the account given of herself by St. Teresa in the book which is commonly known as her Autobiography. This work, remarkable on so many accounts, can never be neglected by her biographers, as it is the chief foundation of our knowledge concerning her at this period of her life. It must, however, be remembered that this work cannot, in the strict sense of the term, be called her Life. It is a document drawn up by herself, at the injunction of her confessors, for the purpose of putting before them her statement concerning her manner of prayer, or, to speak more correctly, concerning the method which

<sup>8</sup> *Life*, c. v. 17. .

God had pursued in His dealings with her soul, especially in the matter of the supernatural prayer to which she had been raised. It is on this account that, at the point of this narrative which we have now reached, she dwells with great particularity of detail on the various stages of prayer to which she had been raised, and goes, in her own beautiful and simple way, into the whole question of the states of prayer, as they are treated of by the writers who have been called on to handle this great subject. No one can be thoroughly acquainted with St. Teresa who does not make himself familiar with these details, which have been considered, ever since they were given to the world, as classical passages in the literature of this subject. But St. Teresa did not mean them for a part of her autobiography in the proper sense of the term, and we should fall into a snare, though by no means an unhappy snare, if we were to follow her at any length in this part of her work. We must content ourselves with that amount of study of them which belongs to the work of her biography, leaving so much that is in the highest sense attractive, for the particular attention of those who are making themselves her disciples in this, the noblest occupation of the human heart and mind.

The year 1555 was a marked time in her spiritual life, for in it she was helped by two special favours to make a great step forward. The first of these she thus relates :

It came to pass one day when I went into the oratory, that I saw a picture which they had put by there, and which had been procured for a certain feast observed in the house.

It was a representation of Christ most grievously wounded, and so devotional, that the very sight of it when I saw it moved me, so well did it show forth that which He suffered for us. With such keenness did I feel the evil return I had made for those wounds, that I thought my heart was breaking. I threw myself on the ground beside it, my tears flowing plenteously, and implored Him to strengthen me once for all, so that I might never offend Him any more.<sup>1</sup>

It was the characteristic of St. Teresa to love images, pictures, and other representations of sacred things and incidents. And our Lord on this occasion used this means of drawing her more near to Himself. She tells us at the same time that she had a tender devotion to St. Mary Magdalene, and that it was her habit after Holy Communion, when she knew that our Lord was truly present in her heart, to place herself at His feet with that most blessed penitent, hoping that her tears would not be rejected. She commended herself at the same time to St. Magdalene, to obtain for her the pardon of her sins. On this occasion she prayed with unusual fervour, giving up all self-reliance, and trusting herself entirely to our Lord, telling Him that she would not rise from her prayer until He had granted her request. She had for many years been accustomed to think of the Agony and Prayer of our Saviour in the Garden, before going to sleep, and had a very great devotion to that mystery, in which she used, in her simple loving way, to make herself the companion of His solitude. She speaks again, on this occasion, of her

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, c. ix. 1.

method of prayer, a kind of interior recollection without much effort of the understanding to produce reflections and considerations, and in which the soul occupies itself in loving. It is, she tells us, a method in which much is sometimes gained and much is sometimes lost—that is, if the soul is no longer able to form acts or affections of love, it finds itself idle and empty, without thoughts to be the foundation of its aspirations. And as she was herself unable to form considerations, she was in the habit of using a meditation-book to help her to occupy her thoughts, and so keep away the crowd of distractions which necessarily presented themselves. This practice, as we have already said, she strongly recommends to others.

St. Teresa also tells us that she was in the habit of using the books of nature, that is, flowers and other such things, to raise her to God and to supply the poverty of her own thoughts and imagination, for she was never able to work much with that faculty. She could recognize our Lord's presence, as a blind man understands the presence of a person to whom he can speak, but whom he cannot see. And this impotence of the imagination always remained with her, though our Lord took care to supply the weakness in other most glorious ways.

The intense effect produced upon her heart on this occasion by the representation of our Lord covered with wounds, the representation known in Catholic countries as that of "Jesus of Nazareth," was the first of the two graces by which our Lord brought about her more entire conversion to Himself.

The other grace given to her about the same

time came from reading the *Confessions* of St. Augustine. She had never read them before, and had not asked for them now, so that she looked upon it as especially ruled by God that they should have been put at this time into her hands. It is not surprising that the natural means chosen for bringing about that complete conversion of her heart and will that was necessary before grace could accomplish in her all God willed, should have been the intimate acquaintance she then made with the mind and soul of St. Augustine. Her deep sense of her own sins had always given her a great sympathy with those saints who were called to sanctity from the distant paths of sin, and from the time she had spent with the Augustinian Nuns she had a special devotion to St. Augustine.

Rich as are the fruits of St. Augustine's labours for the Church, this fruit of the story of his conversion is not unworthy of them. "And this Thy whole gift is to will what I willed, and to will what Thou willest," he says, and so it was henceforth with St. Teresa. She began from this time to lead a life of even greater holiness, withdrawing from everything that could be an occasion of sin, and devoting more and more time to prayer; and God, she says, came to her aid, and bestowed on her the graces that He had been waiting to bestow until He saw in her the fitting preparation.

When I began to read the *Confessions* [she says] I thought I saw myself described, and I began to recommend myself greatly to this glorious Saint. When I came to his conversion, and read how he heard that voice in the garden,

it seemed to me nothing less than that our Lord had uttered it for me, I felt it so in my heart. I remained for some time lost in tears, in great inward sorrow and distress. I believe my soul obtained great strength from His Divine Majesty, and that He must have heard my cry and had compassion on so many tears. It seems to me that I was then very distrustful of myself, placing all my confidence in God, and that I said to Him then that I would not rise up till He granted my petition. I do certainly believe that this was of great service to me, because I have grown better ever since.<sup>2</sup>

St. Teresa here speaks in the strongest terms of her own wonder, after having been delivered from the bondage in which she had long remained, at the extreme misery to which she had submitted for so long. She attributes her liberty itself to the great goodness of God, without which she could not have achieved it. She now began in earnest to devote herself to spending longer times of prayer with Him, to the removal of the occasions of imperfection which had so long hindered her complete surrender of herself to the designs of God, and she speaks of His immense generosity in loading her with spiritual favours and privileges, as if He had been the person Who was most interested in gaining what He wanted from her. She said that she never but once ventured in her life to ask for the spiritual delights and consolations of which she now had so much experience. This was in a time of great desolation and dryness, and she was overwhelmed with shame for having made such a request, though she knew it was not

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, c. ix. 9.



wrong to do so. She understood also that, at this time especially, she owed a great deal to the intercession and patronage of our Blessed Lady and of St. Joseph. She was now frequently favoured with the states of prayer called the prayer of union and the prayer of quiet, of which she gives a full description.

It was on account of these great favours in prayer that St. Teresa now began to suffer much interior disquiet, not at the time of the favours themselves, but when she afterwards came to reflect on the serious imperfections with which, as she considered, her life was still stained. It must be remembered that she was, up to this time, almost without any guidance at all from persons acquainted with the practice and doctrine of prayer, in the technical sense of the word. It was also a time in Spain when there were great alarms prevalent among persons given to piety, on the subject of what appeared to be supernatural favours in prayer. A few years before this, the Church had been scandalized by the discovery of an imposture in this kind, which had made an extraordinary impression on many minds. There had been, for as much as thirty years, a famous nun at Cordova, by name Magdalene of the Cross, who had at last confessed that she had, for that space of time, been under the influence of the devil. She had entered the convent when quite a girl, and had attracted much notice by her appearance of sanctity. She had been chosen Abbess, and in that office had conferred many temporal benefits upon the community, her reputation and influence bringing to it large offerings from the charitable. She had had

many pretended revelations of things distant, as of the captivity of Francis I. of France, the sack of Rome by the Imperial troops, and the like. She had seemed to work miracles. One of these was that she was occasionally seen with the Infant Jesus in her arms, and that at such times her hair used to appear to reach to her feet, a phenomenon which suddenly vanished. When the community went to Holy Communion, although the particles for consecration had been most carefully counted, the priest would miss one, which was found in her mouth, as if she had received It at the hands of angels. It was said that kings, and even Popes, commended themselves to her prayers, and Philip II., at his birth, was wrapped by his mother in clothes which this nun had blessed.

But perhaps the most wonderful part of all this history of Magdalene of the Cross is that the detection of the imposture was due to herself, and that she voluntarily confessed it all. She was first imprisoned, and then dismissed from her convent. The example of Magdalene of the Cross was not the only instance of such deceptions at this time. A nun at Lisbon had succeeded in deluding even so great a man in spiritual discernment as the famous Louis of Granada. The object of the devil in these impostures appears to be two-fold—directly to mislead people, by the deceptions which he is thus enabled to practise, and also to cast doubt and discredit upon true revelations and saintly persons, whom God may choose as the recipients of His own great favours, for the benefit of their own souls and of

the Church at large. At a time such as this, there were sure to be plenty of timid and narrow-minded folk, who would be unwilling to believe in the truth of anything that appeared externally to approach in resemblance to what had turned out to be delusion, and who would in consequence be ready to make the favoured servants of God suffer under suspicion and misrepresentation. The fact that there are false visions and revelations is, in truth, an argument that there are also true visions and revelations, of which those others are the copies. But to many who do not understand the greatness of God's Kingdom, and the marvellousness of His ways with the souls whom He loves, the fact that some visions are false becomes an argument that no visions are true.

This may account in some measure for the trials through which Teresa had now to pass, and to which she owed very much, under the good providence of God. These trials drove her to open her soul to the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, from whom she was to receive guidance and assistance at this most critical point of her career, while our own debt to these trials is scarcely less than hers. It was her trouble on account of her wonderful gifts in prayer that made it necessary for her to write so much about her experience in this kind, and thus to provide for the Church of God in all times the most solid instruction which it possesses on this great subject. Her first alarms on the subject of her gifts in prayer seem to have come from herself. She felt her own great imperfections, as she considered them, and marvelled how God could

communicate Himself so freely to one such as she was. On the other hand, she knew that these great favours made her better and more humble, and she shrank from the thought that it might be the enemy of God and man who was causing these wonderful effects in her. She tells us that, out of a false timidity, she was afraid to address herself to the Fathers of the Society, who had but lately come to Avila, and whose reputation for sanctity was very great. Two years before the time of which we are now speaking, the Society had been invited to Avila for the foundation of a College, and in the year 1555 itself the foundation was more permanently begun, a pious confraternity having made over to them a building which had been a hospital, with the adjacent Church of St. Giles. St. Francis Borja, in this year, sent two Fathers, Juan Padraños and Ferdinand Alvarez del Aguila, to start the new residence. One of these Fathers was the person destined by God to relieve the Saint from her anxieties. But she could not induce herself to apply to them at first. Indeed she shrank back, with what she afterwards blamed as pusillanimity, from any conversation with others on the state of her prayer, and was only forced to this by the fears, already mentioned, of diabolical delusion. She determined on a middle course—that of applying to some of the persons in Avila who were distinguished for their piety and devotion to religion and to the exercise of prayer, in order to learn from them what was to be thought of her own condition.

There was living in Avila a well-known priest, Master Gaspar Daza, who seemed to be the person to

whom she might apply with profit. He was not only famous for his piety and learning, but he had also collected round him a small body of good priests like himself, devoted to good works, both of a spiritual and of a corporal kind, who were to labour for God, not only in Avila, but in the whole diocese of its Bishop. At a later time this good man, with great simplicity and humility, gave over the direction of these souls to Father Balthasar Alvarez.

Teresa did not know Master Gaspar personally, so she applied to him by means of a holy gentleman whose name will appear often in the course of this history, Don Francisco de Salcedo. He was a specimen of the holy class of married men whose condition is no bar to their almost exclusive devotion of their time to exercises of religion and piety. He had a wife, Doña Mencia del Aguila, pious like himself, and given to good works. He was a man of great prayer, and besides his other works of charity and piety, he found time, for twenty years, to attend the lectures on theology in the Dominican College of the city. St. Teresa speaks of him as a man of singular humility, and of very sweet and engaging manners to all. Francisco de Salcedo brought Master Gaspar to see St. Teresa, and she describes her sense of shame and confusion at finding herself in close spiritual converse with so holy a man.

This Master Gaspar Daza was himself a strong soul, and he probably took quite literally all that Teresa said to him against herself. He would not take charge of her soul as her confessor, but he

gave her directions which did not suit her. She had not yet found the guide she required. He insisted on her abandoning at once the little imperfections which seemed to be keeping her back from an entire surrender to the will of God, and she found herself unequal to the arduous methods which he proposed. She was more inclined to despair than to advance. At the same time, she engaged Don Francisco to visit her occasionally and receive her accounts of herself, and thus he became a kind of director to her.

In this arrangement, however, Teresa was again at fault. Don Francisco did not understand the dealings of God with her soul. He had but a limited experience, and this led him to be somewhat strict and narrow, with all his holiness. His ideas of sanctity were drawn from the few holy persons whom he knew, none of whom, as it appears, were favoured by God in the particular manner related to him by Teresa of herself. There was then in Avila the famous Maria Diaz, afterwards, like Teresa, the penitent of Father Balthasar Alvarez. Maria was led along the plain common path to perfection, and the good Don Francisco could hardly conceive any other. When Teresa related to him, on the one hand, her marvellous favours, and, on the other hand, her repeated imperfections, he said that the two did not agree together. He wished her to give him an account of the manner of her prayer. She was rather passive than active in this, and she was altogether unable to explain it. Thus she was forced to look into books of mystical theology to find some-

thing that might correspond to what she experienced, and at last she thought she had hit upon something which she recognized as resembling her state in a book written by a Franciscan lay-brother, Bernardino de Laredo, called the *Subida* (ascent) *del monte Sion*. She marked some passages which seem to have described the prayer of union, as it is called, and gave the book to Don Francisco, who was to consult over the matter with Master Gaspar. She was in great trouble, for if her guides decided against her, she might have to give up her habit of mental prayer, knowing, as she did, the immense benefits which she had derived from it, and yet, if it was all a delusion, it might seem better to abandon it. Her two friends, if we are to take what she now says of the mischief that sometimes comes from talking over these matters of confidence as applying to them, seem to have been at least indiscreet in letting it get abroad that she had consulted them.

She waited in great anxiety for their decision. At last Don Francisco came to her with bad news. They had come to the conclusion that she was the victim of diabolical delusion, and had better give up her prayer altogether. But they added, it would be best for her to go to confession to Father Padraños, one of the Fathers of the Society, and they did not doubt that he would have light given him in the sacred tribunal to understand the true state of her soul, and to direct her in the best manner. She was to do exactly what she was enjoined to do by him in everything, for her soul was in great danger.

This was the beginning of the communication on spiritual matters between St. Teresa and the Fathers of the Society of Jesus. She was full of alarm, but she did as she was bid, and these two good servants of God, who could not understand her themselves, and who had indeed come to most false conclusions concerning her, were yet, in their humility and good faith, the instruments of procuring for her just the help she needed. Teresa tells us how, in her shyness, she begged the sacristan and portress—without whose agency she could not send for, or receive the visit of, Father Padraños—not to mention the business to any one. They seem to have kept the secret—but a nun was at the door when she was called down to the parlour to meet Father Padraños, and thus it got at once all over the convent that Doña Teresa had sent for a Jesuit confessor.

Father Padraños was a young man, but he had been well trained, and he dealt with Teresa according to the rules which are drawn from the principles of St. Ignatius. He heard her general confession, and, according to some authorities, gave her at least some of the Spiritual Exercises. She tells us that her soul experienced a great peace after the general confession. Then he bade her cultivate and increase her devotion to the Sacred Humanity of our Lord. She was to meditate on that, and especially on the Passion, and she was for the present, and until he told her the contrary, to resist the spiritual delights which drew her away from the subject of her ordinary prayer. He encouraged her also to attempt a greater amount of corporal penance. Hitherto, it seems, she had



done comparatively little in this way, probably on account of her great bodily sufferings, from illnesses of various kinds. Father Padraños told her that perhaps God made her suffer so much in that way, because she did not practise more penance of the voluntary kind. He told her also that she would be very grievously responsible, if she did not do the very utmost in her power to correspond to the designs of God upon her. She says that she felt as if the Holy Ghost spoke to her by the mouth of her new guide.

His wise and cautious treatment of her soul set her at once at liberty. As was to be expected with a soul like hers, she at once began to outrun his directions. Her penances became frequent and severe. She grew rapidly in her love for the Sacred Humanity of our Lord. She broke off a number of little attachments, not wrong or harmful in themselves, but obstacles to a soul whom our Lord was drawing entirely to Himself. Hitherto she had felt that to break off in this way was a kind of ingratitude to persons who loved her and had been of great use to her. Now she saw that nothing must stand between her and her perfect devotion to Him Who had chosen to make her His spouse. She could not bear any longer to retain the little superfluities which she had before been attached to. If she had anything of this kind, she got rid of it before beginning her prayer. She was continually praying for perseverance in her determination to refuse nothing to our Lord.

She went on in this way for about two months. Her only difficulty in obeying Father Padraños was

as to the command he had laid upon her, to resist the spiritual favours which were now as before so freely offered to her. She tells us that before this time she had considered them so easy to lose, that she had been afraid to stir hand or foot while they were granted to her. Now she found that, distract herself as she would in endeavouring to obey her director, she could not get rid of them. Our Lord would not, as it were, be put away.

The more I tried to distract myself, the more our Lord poured over me that sweetness and joy which seemed to me to be flowing around me, so that I could not in any way escape from it, and so it was : I was so careful about this resistance, that it was a pain to me. But our Lord was more careful to show His mercies, and during these two months to reveal Himself more than before, so that I might the better comprehend that it was no longer in my power to resist Him.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, c. xxiv. I.

## CHAPTER V.

### *New Direction.*

IT was just at this critical point in the career of St. Teresa, that the great St. Francis Borja came to Avila. He had been appointed by St. Ignatius General Commissary for the government of the Society in Spain, in the year 1554, and had been confirmed in this appointment by the second General, Father James Laynez, after the death of the Founder. It seems to have been in the year 1559, after his visit to the retired Emperor Charles V., in the Monastery of San Yuste, that this short sojourn of his at Avila took place. He stayed in the town for a fortnight, and, during that time, Father Padraños spoke to him about Teresa. He had one if not two interviews with her. He was known to be a man of great experience in the matter of prayer, and he heard with delight and consolation the account of herself given to him by Teresa. He entirely approved of her spirit, and said that her prayer was the work of God. In one respect he altered the rule laid down by Father Padraños. She was to begin her prayer on one of the mysteries of the Passion of our Lord, but if, after doing this, she found that she was drawn away by the preternatural movements of which she

had now so much experience, she was not to resist them. This visit of the Saint was the foundation of an intimacy between him and St. Teresa which lasted during the remainder of his life. He is said to have written to her several letters, but they are unfortunately not preserved to us. St. Teresa says herself that she conferred with him twice on the state of her soul, so that unless he saw her twice on this occasion, he must again have visited her at Avila.

The great consolation which Teresa derived from this interview was somewhat marred by the act of St. Francis himself, who removed Father Padraños to another post. She was in great trouble, having so lately found what she had so long been seeking in vain, and now, as it seemed, being again left to herself. But she had made the acquaintance of the priests of the Society, and this was the most important step of all at the time. By means of a relative and of Doña Guiomar de Ulloa, with whom she had now become acquainted, she was able to obtain the guidance of another Father of the Society, who helped her very greatly. It is uncertain who this Father was. Probably the conjecture that it was Father Ferdinand Alvarez is true. Whoever he was, he advanced her considerably in the path of perfection. She was to leave nothing undone that she might be more pleasing to God. He insisted on her relinquishing even the lawful affections of which we have already spoken. She asked him whether he would force her to be ungrateful, and he bade her lay the matter before God for a certain number of days, reciting the *Veni Creator* that she might

know the Divine will. It was then that she was first favoured with an ecstasy.

“One day,” she tells us, “having prayed for some time, and implored our Lord to help me to please Him in all things, I began the hymn, and as I was saying it, I fell into a trance, so suddenly, that I was, as it were, carried out of myself. I could have no doubt of it, for it was most plain. This was the first time that our Lord bestowed upon me the grace of ecstasy. I heard these words: ‘I will not have thee converse with men, but with angels.’ This made me wonder very much, for the commotion of my spirit was great, and these words were uttered in the depth of my soul. They made me afraid, though, on the other hand, they gave me great comfort; which, when I had lost the fear, caused, I believe, by the strangeness of the visitation, remained with me.” She adds that the words which she heard had their full effect. “These words have been fulfilled. For I have never been able to form friendships with, nor have any comfort in, nor any particular love for, any persons whatsoever, except those who I believe love God and who strive to serve Him. It has not been in my power to do it. It is nothing to me that they are my kindred or my friends, if I do not know them to be lovers of God, or persons given to prayer, it is to me a painful cross to converse with any one. This is the truth, as far as I can judge. From that day forth, I have had courage as great as to leave all things for God, Who in one moment—and it seems to me but a moment—was pleased to change His servant into another person. Accordingly, there

was no necessity for laying further commands on me in this matter. When my confessor saw how much I clung to these friendships, he did not venture to bid me distinctly to give them up. He must have waited till our Lord did the work, as He did, Himself. . . . So I told my confessor of it, and gave up everything, according to his advice. It did a great deal of good to those with whom I used to converse, to see my determination. God be blessed for ever, Who in one moment set me free, while I had for many years been making vain efforts, and had never succeeded, very often also doing such violence to myself as injured my health; but as it was done by Him Who is Almighty, and the true Lord of all, it gave me no pain whatever.”<sup>1</sup>

This was, as has been said, the first time that St. Teresa had experienced in herself the particular preternatural effect which is called ecstasy. She had at least once before heard the interior “locutions” which produces so great an effect on the souls to whom it is vouchsafed. At the time that she had placed herself under the direction of Don Francisco de Salcedo, as she tells us in an earlier chapter of her Life, she had been made the subject of criticism on account of the improvement which had been observed in her, and was spoken of as if she were setting up for a saint. She had humbled herself interiorly, thinking how far she was from the perfection of other members of her community, to whom, nevertheless, the favours which she received in prayer were not granted. She had come to the words of the

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, c. xxiv. 7—9.

psalm at None, *Justus es Domine, et rectum judicium Tuum*, and was marvelling at the various ways of His providence with herself and with others, whom she thought so much better than herself, when she heard the words, "Serve thou Me, and trouble not thyself with the rest."

At the point in her account of herself at which this first ecstasy is related by St. Teresa, she enlarges much on the characteristics of these words or "locutions" which God sometimes addresses to the soul, on the certainty with which He fills them as to the truth of the communication, and on the illusions by which the devil is sometimes allowed to imitate these communications. These subjects belong more properly to a treatise on mystical theology than to the present biography, and we do not linger upon them. It is in connection with the same point that she relates her own great suffering, at a time when a number of persons, all of them persons of piety and holiness of life, were united in thinking that she was under illusion as to the favours which she received, especially in the matter of "locutions" addressed to her in prayer. We cannot feel certain that this passage has reference to the time of her life of which we are now speaking. It is her habit in her relations of her state to her confessors, to let herself be led away into frequent digressions, if indeed a passage which is so strictly pertinent to the matter which she has in hand can be called a digression. At the time of which she here speaks it was her custom to speak to no one about herself but one, who, as it appears, was her confessor. But these five or six

zealous persons used to converse together about her, and it seemed to them all, as has been said, that she was under delusion. It was resolved that she should not receive Holy Communion so often, and that she should distract herself with external occupations and avoid solitude. Her confessor appeared at least to side with them. Her great object in prayer was to beseech God to lead her by another way. She tells us that she was thus compelled to live much in the society of other people, yet that our Lord chose to grant her great powers of recollection and used to force His own words on her in the midst of company. It was when she was alone that she was most desolate, for she was not allowed to pray as usual, and remained hour after hour in a state of fear and apprehension, afflicted beyond measure by the thought that it might be the evil one who was addressing her. But the end of all this trouble was soon brought about by a single "locution" of our Lord. She heard Him say to her: "Daughter, fear not; it is I, and I will not desert thee: fear not."

"It seemed to me," she says, "in the state in which I was, that many hours would have been necessary to calm me, and that no one could have done it, yet I found myself, through these words alone, tranquil and strong, courageous and confident, at rest and enlightened. In a moment, my soul seemed changed, and I felt I could maintain against all the world that my prayer was the work of God. Oh, how good is God! How good is our Lord! And how powerful! He gives not only counsel, but relief as well. His words are deeds. O my God!



As He strengthens our faith, love grows. So it is, in truth, for I used frequently to recollect how our Lord, when the tempest arose, commanded the winds to be still over the sea. . . . I desire to serve this my Lord ; I aim at nothing else but His pleasure ; I seek no joy, no rest, no other good, than that of doing His will. I was so confident that I had no other desire, that I could assert it. Seeing then that our Lord is so powerful, as I see and know He is, and that the evil spirits are His slaves, of which there can be no doubt, because it is of faith, and I a servant of this our Lord and King, what harm can Satan do me ? Why have I not strength enough to fight against all Hell ? I took up the Cross in my hand, I was changed in a moment into another person, and it seemed as if God had really given me courage enough not to be afraid of encountering all the evil spirits. It seemed to me that I could, with the Cross, easily defeat them altogether, so I cried out, 'Come on, all of you ! I am the servant of our Lord, I should like to see what you can do against me.' And certainly they seemed to be afraid of me, for I was left in peace. I feared them so little, that the terrors which until now oppressed me, quitted me altogether, and though I saw them occasionally—I shall speak of this by and by—I was never again afraid of them, on the contrary, they seemed to be afraid of me."

She ends this chapter of her Life by saying, "I am really much more afraid of those people who have so great a fear of the devil than I am of the devil himself. Satan can do me no harm whatever, but

they can trouble me much, particularly if they be confessors. I have spent some years of such great anxiety, that even now I am amazed that I was able to bear it. Blessed be our Lord, Who has so effectually helped me!"<sup>2</sup>

In a passage which follows soon on that which has just now been quoted, St. Teresa speaks of a confessor under whom she thinks that she made greater advance in perfection than under any other, although he treated her with considerable severity. "He mortified me greatly," she says, "and now and then distressed me; he tried me heavily, for he disquieted me exceedingly, and yet he was the one who, I believe, did me the most good. Though I had a great affection for him, I was occasionally tempted to leave him. I thought that the pain he inflicted upon me disturbed my prayer. Whenever I was resolved on leaving him, I used instantly to feel that I ought not to do so; and one reproach of our Lord would press more heavily on me than all my confessor did. Now and then I was worn out—torture on the one hand, reproaches on the other. I required it, for my will was but little subdued. Our Lord said to me once, 'That there was no obedience where there was no resolution to suffer; that I was to think of His sufferings, and then everything would be easy.'"<sup>3</sup>

The confessor here spoken of seems certainly to have been the famous Father Balthasar Alvarez, with whose name that of St. Teresa is indissolubly connected. Like Father Juan Padraños, he was a young man, and when he first came to Avila he was

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, c. xxv.

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, c. xxvi. 4.

not yet a priest. He studied for two years under the Dominican Fathers in their College at Avila, and was then ordained priest. He remained at Avila for six years, the most important, in one sense, perhaps, of the career of St. Teresa, for it was in that time that the great design of the reformation of the Order of Mount Carmel was conceived and its execution begun. Father Balthasar was a man of eminent sanctity, and of much strictness both in his own life and in his dealings with others. Although his office in the new College of Avila was only that of Minister, that is, the second in command, he was practically the Superior for nearly the whole time during which he remained in the city, for, except for two periods, one of six months and the other of nine, there was no Rector over him. He was full of zeal, and spent much time in the confessional and in helping on the spiritual welfare of persons outside the College.

It was his principle that it belonged to the Institute of the Society to lead others to the highest perfection of which their state and the graces they had received from God made them capable, and that every one was capable of perfection in some degree. At the same time he thoroughly realized the necessity, for one who was to help others, of keeping himself in the closest possible union with God. He did not consider it a matter of ambition to have a great number of penitents, but he felt bound to urge on the perfection of those whom he had to guide, and he was never satisfied unless they were advancing. God, he thought, would exact of confessors an account, not only of their own faults, but of those from which they did

not turn away those under them, and also of the perfection which they had let them miss. It was his particular object to free them from the mischief which results from idle and superfluous intimacies and acquaintances, of which he was a great enemy, saying it was difficult to know how much harm to souls resulted from them. He never allowed his penitents to show him any sort of personal affection, and would receive no little presents or kindnesses from any one. He was glad that they should sometimes go to other priests. His great desire was to make them persons of prayer. He would never speak with them, except of Divine things, and no one was bold enough to violate this law which he insisted on. At the same time he was so full of spiritual lore himself, that he poured it forth most abundantly, and could in one conversation kindle in the hearts of those who heard him a great flame of love.

It should be remembered that, at the time of which we are now speaking, Father Balthasar Alvarez was a young priest, quite lately ordained, and consequently without experience in the treatment of souls. It would have been a great trial to any ordinary priest, however exalted his own gifts in the way of prayer, to have to deal with a soul treated by God in a way so exceptional as that of St. Teresa. His own great and continual union with God, and his high spiritual gifts, did very much to supply the want of actual experience in the case of this Father. If he had been left to himself, it is probable that his saintly penitent would have had but little trouble. But Father Balthasar was full of humility, he was accus-

tomed to look for guidance to his Superiors, and yet, as has been said, he had usually no Superior given him to whom he could refer. At a later period some discussion which was raised as to his own method of prayer, of which Father Louis de la Puente gives a full account, caused him to lay the whole of his interior life before the General of the Society. In this account he speaks of himself as having been, at the time with which our history is at present concerned, somewhat inclined to anxiety, narrowness, and severity, and, little as we may be inclined to think that he could have had any part in making others suffer, he distinctly accuses himself of this as the result of his own want of interior liberty. So much it is almost necessary to state in order to understand the history of St. Teresa during these few years, when God began to favour her in an extraordinary manner with visions and other such graces.

It appears that the Divine "locutions" addressed to her were the immediate cause of the renewal of the kind of holy persecution which it was the lot of St. Teresa to undergo for nearly two years after these communications had begun. The good "servants of God" at Avila were alarmed, and she was herself so humble and so fearful of delusion, that she readily joined in the many prayers which were made for her, that God might be pleased to lead her on in the path of virtue and prayer by a way different from that which the Divine Majesty had Himself chosen. "I offered up," she says, "all my actions, if there should be any good in them, for this end ; I had recourse to the saints for whom I had a devotion, that they might

deliver me from the Evil One; I made novenas; I commended myself to St. Hilarion, to the Angel St. Michael, to whom I had recently become devout, for this purpose, and many other saints I importuned, that our Lord might show me the way—I mean, that they might obtain this favour from His Majesty.”

In the next paragraph she speaks of the object of her prayer having been, that our Lord would either lead her by another way, or show the truth of this. The answer to these prayers was certainly not quite in accordance with the thoughts of Don Francisco de Salcedo and his friends. Our Lord now began to favour her with visions of Himself. At first she did not see anything.

I was in prayer one day [she tells us]—it was the feast of the glorious St. Peter—when I saw Christ close by me, or to speak more correctly, felt Him, for I saw nothing with the eyes of the body, nothing with the eyes of the soul. He seemed to me to be close beside me, and I saw too, as I believe, that it was He Who was speaking to me. As I was utterly ignorant that such a vision was possible, I was extremely afraid at first, and did nothing but weep; however, when He spoke to me but one word to reassure me, I recovered myself, and was as usual calm and comforted, without any fear whatever. Jesus Christ seemed to be by my side continually, and, as the vision was not “imaginary,” I saw no form, but I had a most distinct feeling that He was always on my right hand, as a witness of all that I did, and never at any time, if I was but slightly recollected or not too much distracted, could I be ignorant of His near presence.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, c. xxvii. 3.

Her confessor asked her how she knew that it was our Lord, and she could only say that she did not know how she knew it. It was, as she afterwards learnt, an "intellectual" vision, a vision of a very high kind, less likely than others to be imitated by Satan. She goes on, in the passage from which all this account is taken, to speak most beautifully about this kind of vision, its difference from the presence of God which is gained in prayer, especially the prayer of union and quiet, and the certainty with which the soul is impressed as to the truth of the vision. But she adds: "There is so much of Heaven in this language that it cannot well be understood on earth, though we may desire ever so much to explain it, if our Lord will not teach it experimentally." The vision lasted for several days. "It did me so much good," she says, "that I never ceased to pray. Even when I did cease, I contrived that it should be in such a way as that I should not displease Him Whom I saw so clearly present, an eye-witness of my acts."

Some time after this our Lord proceeded further, and showed her first His sacred Hands, then, after some days, His Divine Face, and lastly, His whole Person, as He is frequently represented in the mystery of the Resurrection. She was, as usual, frightened at first, especially wondering at the gradual manner in which He thus manifested Himself to her. She learnt afterwards that He was compassionately dealing with her as with the disciples after the Resurrection, according to the weakness of her nature. "You will think," she says, "that it

required no great courage to look upon Hands and Face so beautiful. But so beautiful are glorified bodies, that the glory which surrounds them renders those beside themselves who see that which is so supernatural and beautiful." This she says about the earlier and partial visions of the Sacred Humanity. Of the third she says, "On one of the feasts of St. Paul, when I was at Mass, there stood before me the most Sacred Humanity, as painters represent Him after the Resurrection, in great beauty and majesty. . . . If in Heaven itself there were nothing else to delight our eyes but the great beauty of glorified bodies, that would be an excessive bliss, particularly the vision of the Humanity of Jesus Christ our Lord. If here below, when His Majesty shows Himself to us according to the measure which our wretchedness can bear, it is so great, what must it be there, where the fruition of it is so complete!" She tells us, according to the common doctrine on such matters, that the visions of the kind of which she is now speaking, which are "imaginary," and which are not seen by the eyes of the body, but by those of the soul, are not so perfect as the "intellectual" visions of which she has lately spoken, but, on the other hand, more perfect than those which are seen by the eyes of the body.<sup>5</sup>

She was still troubled with fears lest she had fancied all these things, nor, considering the constant doubts expressed on all sides as to the matter, can this surprise us. Father Balthasar used to quiet her by making her see that in any case she had said what

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, c. xxviii. 3, 4.



she believed to be true in her accounts to him, and that she would not for all the world tell a lie.

These visions went on for two years and more.

And though I saw Him speaking to me, and though I was contemplating His great beauty, and the sweetness with which those words of His came forth from His Divine mouth—they were sometimes uttered with severity—and though I was extremely desirous to behold the colour of His eyes, or the form of them, so that I might be able to describe them, yet I never attained to the sight of them, and I could do nothing for that end—on the contrary, I lost the vision altogether. Our Lord [she tells us] showed Himself almost always as He is after the Resurrection. It was the same in the Host—only at those times when I was in trouble, and when it was His will to strengthen me, did He show His wounds. Sometimes I saw Him on the Cross, in the Garden, crowned with thorns—but that was rarely—sometimes also carrying His Cross because of my necessities—I may say so—or those of others: but always in the glorified body. Many reproaches and many vexations have I borne while telling this—many suspicions and much persecution also. So certain were they to whom I spoke that I had an evil spirit, that some would have me exorcised. I did not care much for this, but I felt bitterly when I saw that my confessors were afraid to hear me, or when I knew that they were told of anything about me.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, she says, she never could feel sorry that she had had these visions. In another place she speaks very beautifully of their effects on the soul. The representation of our Lord was most vivid.

<sup>6</sup> *Life*, c. xxix. 4.

If what I saw was an image it was a living image—not a dead man, but the living Christ, and He makes me see that He is God and Man—not as He was in the sepulchre, but as He was when He had gone forth from it risen from the dead. He comes at times in majesty so great, that no one can have any doubt that it is our Lord Himself, especially after Communion: we know that He is then present, for faith says so. He shows Himself so clearly to be the Lord of that little dwelling-place, that the soul seems to be dissolved, and lost in Christ. O my Jesus, who can describe the majesty wherein Thou showest Thyself? How utterly Thou art the Lord of the whole world, and of Heaven, and of a thousand other and innumerable worlds and heavens, the creation of which is possible to Thee! . . . I see that it is Thy will that the soul should feel the greatness of Thy majesty, and the power of Thy most Sacred Humanity, united with Thy Divinity. Here, too, we see what the Day of Judgment will be, when we shall behold the King in His majesty, and in the rigour of His justice against the wicked. Here we learn true humility, imprinted in the soul by the sight of its own wretchedness, of which now it cannot be ignorant. Here also is confusion of face, and true repentance for sins: for though the soul sees that our Lord shows how He loves it, yet it knows not where to go, and is utterly dissolved.<sup>7</sup>

In another place, in a letter which we shall have occasion to insert, she speaks of the spiritual effects which these visions produced on her soul—a great fear of offending God, and a generous desire to serve His Supreme Majesty: an entire and prompt obedience to her confessors in everything: a constant effort to gain greater and greater perfection, a great desire for suffering, a love of poverty, great and

<sup>7</sup> *Life*, c. xxviii. 12, 13.

abundant joy under tribulation, a special love for those who persecuted her, an entire deliverance from vainglory, for though she could not forget the graces with which God favoured her, she was always still more mindful of her own sins, and finally, an immense desire for the glory of God and the good of souls, and contempt for all earthly goods.

These were the practical fruits in the soul of St. Teresa of the graces of which we have been speaking. They furnished the best answer that could be made to her critics.

I said to them once [she tells us], If they who thus speak of my state—[that is, that her visions came from the Evil One]—were to tell me that a person with whom I had just conversed, and whom I knew well, was not that person, but that I was deluding myself, and that they knew it, I should certainly trust them rather than my own eyes. But if that person left with me certain jewels—and if, possessing none previously, I held the jewels in my hand, as pledges of a great love, and if I were now rich instead of poor as before—I should not be able to believe this that they said, though I might wish it. Those jewels I could now show them, for all who knew me saw clearly that my soul was changed—and so my confessor said: for the difference was very great in every way—not a pretence, but such as all might most clearly observe. As I was formerly so wicked, I said, I could not believe that Satan, if he wished to deceive me and take me down to Hell, would have recourse to means so adverse to his purpose as this of rooting out my faults, implanting entire and spiritual strength: for I saw clearly that I had become at once another person through the instrumentality of these visions.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Life*, c. xxviii. 19.

St. Teresa tells us that Father Balthasar Alvarez made the same answer to the objection against the truth of the visions which were vouchsafed to her with that already given as her own. But he had a hard battle to fight, as has already been said. His difficulties were still more increased by the line taken by another Father of the Society, a man older than himself, to whom Teresa used to address herself as her confessor when he happened for a time to be absent. This good man fell in with the opinion of the five or six "servants of God" in Avila, who had made up their minds that her visions were diabolical illusions. She was thus exposed to the great trial of direction diametrically contrary to that which she received from her usual confessor. But this was not all. This Father, acting on his own judgment, bade her cross herself whenever a vision was presented to her, and even receive it with gestures of scorn and mockery. "He bade me," she says, "now that I had no power of resisting, always to make the sign of the Cross when I had a vision, to point my finger at it by way of scorn, and be firmly persuaded of its diabolical nature. If I did this, the vision would not recur. I was to be without fear on the point: God would watch over me, and take the vision away." This was a very hard command to Teresa. She could not believe the diabolical character of her visions, nor could she wish that they should cease. She did, however, as she was bidden, praying to God that she might be freed from illusions, invoking St. Peter and St. Paul, on whose feasts her visions had first occurred, and who would, as our Lord

had told her, certainly protect her against illusions, and whom she now saw frequently by her side. The worst of all was that she was told to make a gesture of contempt and insult when she saw our Lord. That she might not be always crossing herself, she held a crucifix in her hand, but she could not always make the contemptuous sign. "It reminded me," she says, "of the insults which the Jews heaped upon Him, and so I prayed Him to forgive me, seeing that I did so in obedience to him who stood in His stead, and not to lay the blame on me, seeing that he was one of those whom He had placed as ministers in His Church. He said to me that I was not to distress myself—that I did well to obey; but that He would make them see the truth of the matter. He seemed to be angry when they made me give up my prayer. He told me to say to them that this was tyranny. He gave me reasons for believing that the visions were not Satanic."<sup>9</sup>

It appears to have been this confessor, who occasionally took the place of Father Balthasar, whom our Lord vouchsafed to convince of the reality of the visions of St. Teresa by granting one such vision to himself. Our Lord appeared to him one night, to his very great astonishment. He told what had happened to St. Teresa. She said it could not be, and begged him not to believe it. But he was too firmly convinced of the truth of his vision to be shaken, and he told her so. Then she told him that for the same reasons which convinced him of

<sup>9</sup> *Life*, c. xxix. 7.

the truth of his vision, others were equally certain of the truth of their own.

It was while she was under this hard obedience that our Lord one day took out of her hand the cross of her rosary, and returned it adorned with four large stones incomparably more precious, as she says, than diamonds. The five Wounds of our Lord were engraven upon them. He told her that the cross would always so appear to her as it was, but no one but herself was to see them. This cross she afterwards gave to her sister, Juana de Ahumada.

Her endeavours to obey the direction she was now under were rewarded only by an increase of the Divine favours which she was commanded to shun. "I tried to distract myself: I never ceased to be in prayer: even during sleep my prayer seemed to be continual: for now my love grew, I made piteous complaints to our Lord, and told Him I could not bear it. Neither was it in my power—though I desired, and more than that, even strove—to give up thinking of Him. Nevertheless, I obeyed to the utmost of my powers, but my power was little or nothing in the matter, and our Lord never released me from that obedience, but, though He bade me obey my confessor, He reassured me in another way, and taught me what I was to say."

In course of time, the truth of the visions began to appear by their effects. "Not long afterwards," she continues, "His Majesty began, according to His promise, to make it clear that it was He Himself Who appeared, by the growth in me of the love of God, so strong, that I knew not who could have

infused it, for it was most supernatural, and I had not attained to it by any efforts of my own. I saw myself dying with a desire to see God, and I knew not how to seek that life otherwise than by dying. Certain great impetuosities of love . . . overwhelmed me. I knew not what to do: for nothing gave me pleasure, and I had no control over myself. It seemed as if my soul were really torn away from myself." It was now that she received the wonderful grace, so like that of the stigmata granted to St. Francis, St. Catharine of Siena, and others, of the piercing of her heart with a lance.

Our Lord was pleased that I should have at times a vision of this kind. I saw an angel close by me, on my left side, in bodily form. It was an imaginary vision, seen by the eyes of the soul. This I am not accustomed to see, unless very rarely. Though I have visions of angels frequently, yet I see them only by an intellectual vision. . . . It was our Lord's will that in this vision I should see the angel in this wise. He was not large, but small of stature, and most beautiful—his face burning, as if he were one of the highest angels, who seem to be all on fire; they must be those whom we call Cherubim. Their names they never tell me: but I see very well that there is in Heaven so great a difference between one angel and another, and between them and the others, that I cannot explain it. I saw in his hand a long spear of gold, and at the iron's point there seemed to be a little fire. He appeared to me to be thrusting it at times into my heart, and to pierce my very entrails. When he drew it out, he seemed to draw them out also, and to leave me all on fire with a great love of God. The pain was so great, that it made me moan, and yet, so surpassing was the sweetness of this excessive

pain, that I could not wish to be rid of it. The soul is satisfied now with nothing less than God. The pain is not bodily, but spiritual, though the body has its share of it, even a large share. . . . During the days that this lasted, I went about, as if beside myself. I wished to see, to speak with, no one, but only to cherish my pain, which was to me a greater bliss than all created things could give me.<sup>10</sup>

We learn from her own words, and from other sources, that this grace of transverberation was granted to St. Teresa, not once only, but many times. The wound was not "imaginary" only, but real and material, and the heart of the Saint is still to be seen at Avila, with an opening on each side, the rims of which are half burnt. She used to go about singing softly some verses which she made about it, which are still preserved—

En las internas entrañas  
Senti un golpe repentino,  
El blason era divino,  
Porque obro grandes hazañas.

Con el golpe fui herida ;  
Y aunque la herida es mortal,  
Y es un dolor sin igual,  
Es muerte que causa vida.

Si mata, como da vida ?  
Y si vida, como muerte ?  
Como sana cuando hiere ?  
Y se vé con el unida ?

Tiene tan divinas mañas,  
Que en un tan acerbo trance,  
Sale triunfando de lance  
Obrando grandes hazañas.

<sup>10</sup> *Life*, c. xxix. 16—18.



The following may serve as a free paraphrase of these verses of St. Teresa :

I felt a blow within my inmost heart,  
A sudden blow within this heart of mine,  
The Hand that made that wound was Hand Divine,  
For mighty workings followed from the smart.

That sudden blow, it left me wounded sore ;  
Nor ever have I known such utter pain,  
And though thereby my very life was slain,  
Yet from that death new life sprang forth once more.

How gives it life, that blow that ends my days ?  
How causeth death, if life therefrom up-bounds ?  
How doth it heal, the self-same blow that wounds ?  
That with itself makes one the life it slays ?

Divine His Hand, of strength beyond compare—  
Even in the bitterest struggle of our life,  
He cleaves in triumph through the surging strife,  
And works the works of might which show Him there.

The great things of which these verses speak were to be partly such as the world could see and appreciate, partly and principally and fundamentally the consummation, if we may so speak, of the interior perfection of the Saint herself. The effect of the graces so abundantly bestowed upon her, and of the immense increase in the love of God of which they were the source, is seen in the heroic vow which she made soon after this time, of always doing that which was most perfect. Not only was she so to regulate all her actions and thoughts as not to offend God, Whom she so much loved, by the slightest venial sin, but also so as not to omit anything of the highest perfection. She was always to choose that which presented itself to her as most pleasing and acceptable to God. Thus she was bound by vow not only

to all the commandments of God, all the prescriptions of her rule, all that was enjoined by reason, justice, charity, temperance, patience, fortitude, humility, and all the other virtues, but all this was to be done by her in the most perfect manner and degree, with all the circumstances that could contribute to make it most acceptable to God, and with the most perfect intention. Nor is there any reason to doubt that this vow was most faithfully kept, and those who knew her best and lived as her most intimate friends were never able to detect in her anything that savoured of the slightest imperfection. Some years after this the vow was changed, on account of the scruples which it sometimes raised in her own mind and in that of her confessors, as to what might be the most perfect thing to which she was bound. But the change made no difference in her obligation to aim at perfection : it only fixed the obligation to that which her confessor might decide to be the most perfect thing.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *St. Peter of Alcantara.*

IT might have been thought that the preparation of St. Teresa for the great work which she was to do in and for the Church, had been accomplished when she had been inspired to make this vow and strengthened to keep it. But we are yet at some distance in our history from the beginning of the Reform of Mount Carmel, and St. Teresa was to pass through very much more trial before that point was reached. It appears to have been in the year 1560 that she made the vow of which we have lately spoken. In the same year Providence brought to her, in the midst of her trials interior and exterior, another great Saint who had also been raised up for, among other things, the reform and improvement of the Order of St. Francis to which he belonged. This was St. Peter of Alcantara, who was now drawing near to the end of his long career of extraordinary penance and labours for the advancement of God's glory. We have already mentioned Doña Guiomar de Ulloa, a young widow living in Avila, who had now become a great and intimate friend of the Saint, and who was always ready to give her consolation and to take her part—though she did not, as it seems,

talk over spiritual matters quite so much as Don Francisco de Salcedo and his friends. She was a lady of great virtue and even of much experience in prayer and spiritual things. Hearing that St. Peter was coming to Avila on some business, she asked leave of the Provincial of the Carmelites, under whose jurisdiction the Convent of the Incarnation was, to have Teresa on a visit for a week with her, and during this time she managed to obtain for her several interviews with the Saint.

The work for which God was gradually preparing St. Teresa was in many respects almost identical with that for which St. Peter had been raised up. He had spent his life in efforts to restore in his own Order of St. Francis the extreme strictness of poverty and mortification in which it had been originally founded, and among all the great personages of the Seraphic Order who have had that providential mission, no one has left behind a work more lasting and more entirely after the heart of St. Francis himself than this Spanish Saint, the contemporary of St. Ignatius and so many other saints whose mission it was to introduce new Orders of active labourers in the apostolical vocation. The age of that great revival of Catholic fervour which truly deserves the usurped name of the "Reformation," was remarkable, among other things, for new creations in the ever flourishing garden of the religious life. It witnessed the foundation of the Society of Jesus, of the Barnabites, of the religious of St. Camillus of Lellis, of St. Francis of Caracciolo, of the Theatines, while St. Philip adorned it with the beautiful Institute of the Oratory,

St. Angela Merici laid the foundations of the Congregation of the Ursulines, and St. Jerome Æmilian became the Father of another Congregation destined to the especial care of orphans and children. Thus there was at this time a great movement towards the multiplication of Religious Institutes, which issued in many cases in the foundation or the propagation of active Orders, whose rule of life was necessarily adapted to the exigences of their peculiar work.

But at the same time, and by the side of these and other great servants of God, there were also to be saints and servants of God whose work was to be the renovation of ancient Orders by the restoration of primitive observance. This had been the aim of St. Peter of Alcantara from the very beginning of his religious career, some forty years before he came to Avila on the occasion of which we are speaking. We need not draw out a full history of his struggles and sufferings in the pursuit of this aim, nor speak of his work as the Provincial of the "Province of St. Gabriel," in which considerable advances were made towards the fulfilment of his design, nor of his retirement, for the purpose of still greater solitude and quietness, to the lonely Convent of Arabida, near the mouth of the Tagus. At the time of which we speak he was Commissary General of a new Reform, not yet large enough to be erected into a separate Province—as was afterwards done—which was called the "Custodia," or Guardianship of St. Joseph, and which he lived to see approved of by the Holy See, and separated, for its greater freedom of development,

from the body of the "Observance" to which he himself originally belonged. Thus he preceded St. Teresa in the work of a Reform, as well as in a peculiar devotion to the Blessed Spouse of Mary.

St. Peter, like St. Teresa, was of good family, and had been distinguished for intellectual talent as well as for his great sanctity and austerity. He was no rough peasant, accustomed from his youth to hardships which he only somewhat exaggerated in his penitential observances in religion. He was a slender, graceful, though strongly built man of nearly sixty, when he first met Teresa—a man of extreme modesty of demeanour, gentleness of voice, deliberation of speech, and wonderful humility in dealing with all men. His own work was nearly accomplished, and now he was to hand it on, as it were, to her. She was to do for Mount Carmel what he had accomplished for the Order of St. Francis. Her description of him is so beautiful that we cannot pass on without quoting it :

What an excellent likeness [of what our Lord and the Apostles endured], in the person of that blessed friar, Peter of Alcantara, God has just taken from us ! The world cannot bear such perfection now ; it is said that men's health is grown feebler, and that we are not now in those former times. But this holy man lived in our day ; he had a spirit strong as those of another age, and so he trampled on the world. If men do not go about barefooted, nor under sharp penances, as he did, there are many ways, as I have said before, of trampling on the world ; and our Lord teaches them, when He finds the necessary courage. How great was the courage with which His Majesty filled the Saint I am speaking of ! He did penance—oh, how

sharp it was!—for seven-and-forty years, as all men know. I should like to speak of it, for I know it all to be true. He spoke of it to me and to another person, from whom he kept few or no secrets. As for me, it was the affection he bore me that led him to speak; for it was our Lord's will that he should undertake my defence, and encourage me, at a time when I was in great straits, as I said before. . . . He told me, I think, that for forty years he slept but an hour and a half out of every twenty-four, and that the most laborious penance he underwent when he began was this of overcoming sleep. For that purpose, he was always either kneeling or standing. When he slept he sat down, his head resting against a piece of wood driven into the wall. Lie down he could not, if he wished it; for his cell, as every one knows, was only four feet and a half in length. In all these years, he never covered his head with his hood, even when the sun was hottest or the rain heaviest. He never covered his feet; the only garment he wore was made of sackcloth, and that was as tight as it could be, with nothing between it and his flesh; over this he wore a cloak of the same stuff. He told me that, in the severe cold, he used to take off his cloak, and open the door and window of his cell, in order that, when he put on his cloak again, after shutting the door and the window, he might give some satisfaction to his body, in the pleasure it might have in the increased warmth. His ordinary practice was to eat but once in three days. He said to me, "Why are you astonished at it? It is very possible for any one who is used to it." One of his companions told me that he would be occasionally eight days without eating; that must have been when he was in prayer; for he was subject to trances and to the impetuosities of the love of God, of which I was once a witness myself.

His poverty was extreme; and his mortification, from his youth, as he told me, was such that he was three years

in one of the houses of his Order without knowing how to distinguish one friar from another, otherwise than by the voice ; for he never raised his eyes, and so, when he was obliged to go from one part of the house to the other, he never knew the way, unless he followed the friars. His journeys also were made in the same way. For many years he never saw a woman's face. He told me that it was nothing to him whether he saw it or not ; but he was an aged man when I made his acquaintance ; and his weakness was so great, that he seemed like nothing else but the roots of trees. With all his sanctity, he was very agreeable ; though his words were few, unless he was asked questions : he was very pleasant to speak to, for he had a most clear understanding.<sup>1</sup>

It may well be imagined that St. Peter would be charmed and delighted beyond measure by finding that the Carmelite Order possessed a soul so very highly endowed by nature and grace alike, a soul whose aspirations were so congenial to his own, and who had apparently many years of life before her for the labours for God's glory to which she was longing to devote herself. Teresa's character was one of those, even naturally, which all who know them come easily to love, but the instincts of saintliness give unusual powers of discernment of good, as well of enjoyment of good when it has been discerned. This meeting at Avila must have been the occasion of the purest and most intense joy to St. Peter. To St. Teresa it was more—it came just at a time when she was in great need, as had been the case with the previous visit of St. Francis Borja, and the encouragement which she now received from St. Peter was of

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, c. xxvii. 17—19.



immense service to her. She laid her state of soul open to him, her manner of prayer, her visions and locutions, and their effects, and in talking with him she felt at once that she was in communication with a soul who had known by experience the marvellous dealings of God in the same kind. He made many things clear to her which she had not before understood, especially as to the visions which were not "imaginary." He bade her have no more fears, but praise God and be as certain that it was His Spirit that was working in her as of anything that was not a matter of faith. "He delighted himself greatly with me," she writes, and he showed her all the favour and gave her all the help he could. From that time he took her in a manner under his care, and communicated to her his own interests and affairs, having a great desire to see her in possession of what he had himself already received from God. "To a person whom our Lord has raised to this state, there is no pleasure or comfort equal to that of meeting with another whom our Lord has begun to raise in the same way."

This holy man could sympathize with her, also, in the peculiar trials to which she was still exposed. "He told me that one of the greatest trials was that which I had borne, namely, the contradiction of good people, and that more was in reserve for me; I had need, therefore, of some one—and there was no one in this city—who understood me; but he would speak to my confessor, and to that married nobleman [Don Francisco] who was one of those who tormented me most, and who, because of his great affection for me,

was the cause of all these attacks." Father Balthasar, she tells us, was the more easily satisfied of the two, and even Don Francisco was so far pacified that he was kept in some measure from frightening her as much as had been his wont. St. Peter left her with an agreement that she should write to him about herself, and that they should pray for one another. She was to continue her prayer without doubting that it was the work of God, mention any doubts she had to her confessor, and be at peace. But even the confidence which his presence had engendered passed away in some measure under the renewed trials which she had to undergo from the persistent urgency of her spiritual friends, who would still have it that she was deluded.

It was for St. Peter of Alcantara that the first of what are called St. Teresa's "Relations" was written. This was a statement of the manner of her prayer, of the graces with which God favoured her, and the like. It was no doubt forced from her by the vexations to which she was continually exposed from Francisco de Salcedo and her other friends, who would have it that she was the prey of delusion in all these matters. Whether it was drawn up at the time of their first meeting, or sent to St. Peter at a later period, is not quite certain. But it is so important a paper, that it must naturally find a place in a work like the present.

1. The method of prayer I observe at present is this : when I am in prayer, it is very rarely that I can use the understanding, because the soul becomes at once recollected, remains in repose, or falls into a trance, so that I

cannot in any way have the use of the faculties and the senses,—so much so, that the hearing alone is left ; but then it does not help me to understand anything.

2. It often happens, when I am not even thinking of the things of God, but engaged in other matters, and when prayer seems to be beyond my power, whatever efforts I might make, because of the great aridity I am in, bodily pains contributing thereto, that this recollection or elevation of spirit comes upon me so suddenly that I cannot withstand it, and the fruits and blessings it brings with it are in a moment mine : and this without my having had a vision, or heard anything, or knowing where I am, except that when the soul seems to be lost I see it make great progress, which I could not have made if I had laboured for a whole year, so great is my gain.

3. At other times certain excessive impetuosities occur, accompanied with a certain fainting away of the soul for God, so that I have no control over myself ;<sup>2</sup> my life seems to have come to an end, and so it makes me cry out and call upon God ; and this comes upon me with great vehemence. Sometimes I cannot remain sitting, so great is the oppression of the heat ; and this pain comes on without my doing anything to cause it, and the nature of it is such that my soul would be glad never to be without it while I live. And the longings I have are longings not to live ; and they come on because it seems as if I must live on without being able to find any relief, for relief comes from the vision of God, which comes by death, and death is what I cannot take ; and with all this my soul thinks that all except itself are filled with consolations, and that all find help in their troubles, but not itself. The distress thus occasioned is so intense that—if our Lord did not relieve it by throwing it into a trance, whereby all is made calm, and the soul rests in great quiet and is satisfied, now

<sup>2</sup> See *Life*, c. xxix. §§ 9—13.

by seeing something of that which it desires, now by hearing other things—it would seem to be impossible for it to be delivered from this pain.

4. At other times there come upon me certain desires to serve God, with a vehemence so great that I cannot describe it, and accompanied with a certain pain at seeing how unprofitable I am. It seems to me then that there is nothing in the world, neither death nor martyrdom, that I could not easily endure. This conviction, too, is not the result of any reflection, but comes in a moment. I am wholly changed, and I know not whence cometh such great courage. I think I should like to raise my voice, and publish to all the world how important it is for men not to be satisfied with the common way, and how great the good is that God will give us if we prepare ourselves to receive it. I say it again, these desires are such that I am melted away in myself, for I seem to desire what I cannot have. The body seems to me to hold me in prison, through its inability to serve God and my state<sup>3</sup> in anything; for if it were not for the body, I might do very great things, so far as my strength would allow; and thus, because I see myself without any power whatever to serve God, I feel this pain in a way wholly indescribable; the issue is delight, recollection, and the consolation of God.

5. Again, it has happened, when these longings to serve Him come upon me, that I wish to do penance, but I am not able. It would be a great relief to me, and it does relieve and cheer me, though what I do is almost nothing, because of my bodily weakness; and yet, if I were to give way to these my longings, I believe I should observe no moderation.

6. Sometimes, if I have to speak to any one, I am greatly distressed, and I suffer so much that it makes me weep abundantly; for my whole desire is to be alone, and

<sup>3</sup> De la Puente thinks she means the religious state.

solitude comforts me, though at times I neither pray nor read, and conversation—particularly of kindred and connections—seems oppressive, and myself to be as a slave, except when I speak to those whose conversation is of prayer and matters of the soul,—in these I find comfort and joy;<sup>4</sup> yet these occasionally are too much for me, and I would rather not see them, but go where I might be alone: though this is not often the case, for those especially who direct my conscience always console me.

7. At other times it gives me much pain that I must eat and sleep, being less able to do so than any one. I submit that I may serve God, and thus I offer up those actions to Him. Time seems to me too short, and that I have not enough for my prayer, for I should never be tired of being alone. I am always wishing I had time for reading, for I have always been fond of reading. I read very little, for when I take up a book I become recollected through the pleasure it gives me, and thus my reading is turned into prayer: and it is but rarely, for I have many occupations; and though they are good, they do not give me the pleasure which reading would give. And thus I am always wishing for more time, and everything becomes disagreeable, so I believe, because I see I cannot do what I wish and desire.

8. All these desires, with an increase in virtue, have been given me by our Lord since He raised me to this prayer of quiet, and sent these raptures. I find myself so improved that I look on myself as being a mass of perdition before this. These raptures and visions leave me in possession of the blessings I shall now speak of; and I maintain that, if there be any good in me, they are the occasions of it.

9. I have made a very strong resolution never to offend God, not even venially. I would rather die a thousand deaths than do anything of the kind knowingly. I am

<sup>4</sup> See *Life*, c. xxiv. § 8, and c. xxxi. § 22.

resolved never to leave undone anything I can consider to be the more perfect, or more for the honour of our Lord, if he who has the care of my soul and directs me tells me I may do it. Cost me what pain it might, I would not leave such an act undone for all the treasures of the world. If I were to do so, I do not think I could have the face to ask anything of God our Lord, or to make my prayer; and yet, for all this, I have many faults and imperfections. I am obedient to my confessor,<sup>5</sup> though imperfectly; but if I know that he wishes or commands anything, I would not leave that undone, so far as I understand it; if I did so, I should think myself under a grievous delusion.

10. I have a longing for poverty, though not free from imperfection; however I believe, if I had wealth, I would not reserve any revenue, nor hoard money for myself, nor do I care for it; I wish to have only what is necessary. Nevertheless, I feel that I am very defective in this virtue; for, though I desire nothing for myself, I should like to have something to give away: still, I desire no revenue, nor anything for myself.<sup>6</sup>

11. In almost all the visions I have had, I have found good, if it be not a delusion of Satan; herein I submit myself to the judgment of my confessors.

12. As to fine and beautiful things, such as water, fields, perfume, music, &c., I think I would rather not have them, so great is the difference between them and what I am in the habit of seeing, and so all pleasure in them is gone from me.<sup>7</sup> Hence it is that I care not for them, unless it be at the first sight; they never make any further impression; to me they seem but dirt.

13. If I speak or converse with people in the world—for I cannot help it—even about prayer, and if the conversation be long, though to pass away the time, I am under great

<sup>5</sup> See *Life*, c. xxii. § 19.

See *Life*, c. xxxv. § 2.

<sup>7</sup> See *Life*, c. ix. § 6, and c. xiv. § 7.

constraint if it be not necessary, for it gives me much pain.

14. Amusements, of which I used to be fond, and worldly things, are all disagreeable to me now, and I cannot look at them.

15. The longings which I said I have,<sup>8</sup> of loving and serving and seeing God, are not helped by any reflections, as formerly, when I thought I was very devout, and shed many tears ; but they flow out of a certain fire and heat so excessive that, I repeat it, if God did not relieve them by throwing me into a trance, wherein the soul seems to find itself satisfied, I believe my life would come to an end at once.

16. When I see persons making great progress, and thus resolved, detached, and courageous, I love them much ; and I should like to have my conversation with such persons, and I think they help me on. People who are afraid, and seemingly cautious in those things, the doing of which is perfectly reasonable here, seem to vex me, and drive me to pray to God and the saints to make them undertake such things as these which now frighten us. Not that I am good for anything myself, but because I believe that God helps those who, for His sake, apply themselves to great things, and that He never abandons any one who puts his trust in Him only. And I should like to find any one who would help me to believe so, and to be without thought about food and raiment, but leave it all in the hands of God.<sup>9</sup>

17. This leaving in the hands of God the supply of all I need is not to be understood as excluding all labours on my part, but merely solicitude—I mean, the solicitude of care. And since I have attained to this liberty, it goes well with me, and I labour to forget myself as much as I can. I do

<sup>8</sup> See § 3, above.

<sup>9</sup> St. Matt. vi. 31: "Nolite ergo solliciti esse dicentes, quid manducabimus, . . . aut quo operiemur?"

not think it is a year ago since our Lord gave me this liberty.

18. Vainglory <sup>10</sup>—glory be to God!—so far as I know, there is no reason why I should have any; for I see plainly that in these things which God sends me I have no part myself: on the contrary, God makes me conscious of my own wretchedness; for whatever reflections I might be able to make, I could never come to the knowledge of such deep truths as I attain to in a single rapture.

19. When I speak of these things a few days after, they seem to me as if they had happened to another person. Previously, I thought it a wrong to me that they should be known to others; but I see now that I am not therefore any the better, but rather worse, seeing that I make so little progress after receiving mercies so great. And certainly, in every way, it seems to me that there was not in the world anybody worse than myself; and so the virtues of others seem to me much more meritorious than mine, and that I do nothing myself but receive graces, and that God must give to others at once all that He is now giving unto me; and I pray Him not to reward me in this life; and so I believe that God has led me along this way because I am weak and wicked.

20. When I am in prayer, and even almost always when I am able to reflect at all, I cannot, even if I tried, pray to God for rest, or desire it; for I see that His life was one of suffering, and that I ask Him to send me, giving me first the grace to bear it.

21. Everything of this kind, and of the highest perfection, seems to make so deep an impression on me in prayer, that I am amazed at the sight of truths so great and so clear that the things of the world seem to be folly; and so it is necessary for me to take pains to reflect on the way I demeaned myself formerly in the things of the world, for it

<sup>10</sup> See *Life*, c. vii. § 2.



seems to me folly to feel for deaths and the troubles of the world,—at least, that sorrow for, or love of, kindred and friends should last long. I say I have to take pains when I am considering what I was, and what I used to feel.

22. If I see people do anything which clearly seems to be sin, I cannot make up my mind that they have offended God; and if I dwell upon this at all—which happens rarely or never—I never can make up my mind, though I see it plainly enough. It seems to me that everybody is as anxious to serve God as I am. And herein God has been very gracious unto me, for I never dwell on an evil deed to remember it afterwards; and if I do remember it, I see some virtue or other in that person. In this way these things never weary me, except generally: but heresies do, they distress me very often, and almost always when I think of them they seem to me to be the only trouble which should be felt. And also I feel, when I see people who used to give themselves to prayer fall away; this gives me pain, but not much, because I strive not to dwell upon it.

23. I find, also, that I am improved in the matter of that excessive neatness which I was wont to observe,<sup>11</sup> though not wholly delivered from it. I do not discern that I am always mortified in this; sometimes, however, I do.

24. All this I have described, together with a very constant dwelling in thought on God, is the ordinary state of my soul, so far as I can understand it. And if I must be busy about something else, without my seeking it, as I said before,<sup>12</sup> I know not who makes me awake,—and this not always, only when I am busy with things of importance; and such—glory be to God!—only at intervals demand my attention, and do not occupy me at all times.

25. For some days—they are not many, however—for three, or four, or five, all my good and fervent thoughts

<sup>11</sup> See *Life*, c. ii. § 2.

<sup>12</sup> § 2, above.

and visions seem to be withdrawn, yea, even forgotten, so that, if I were to seek for it, I know of no good that can ever have been in me. It seems to have been all a dream, or at least I can call nothing to mind. Bodily pains at the same time distress me. My understanding is troubled, so that I cannot think at all about God, neither do I know under what law I live. If I read anything, I do not understand it; I seem to be full of faults, and without any resolution whatever to practise virtue; and the great resolution I used to have is come to this, that I seem to be unable to resist the least temptation or slander of the world. It suggests itself to me then that I am good for nothing, if any one would have me undertake more than the common duties. I give way to sadness, thinking I have deceived all those who trusted me at all. I should like to hide myself where nobody could see me; but my desire for solitude arises from want of courage, not from love of virtue. It seems to me that I should like to dispute with all who contradict me; I am under the influence of these impressions, only God has been so gracious unto me, that I do not offend more frequently than I was wont to do, nor do I ask Him to deliver me from them, but only, if it be His will I should always suffer thus, to keep me from offending Him; and I submit myself to His will with my whole heart, and I see that it is a very great grace bestowed upon me that He does not keep me constantly in this state.

26. One thing astonishes me: it is that while I am in this state, through a single word of those I am in the habit of hearing, or a single vision, or a little self-recollection, lasting but an *Ave Maria*, or through my drawing near to communicate, I find my soul and body so calm, so sound, the understanding so clear, and myself possessing all the strength and all the good desires I usually have. And this I have had experience of very often—at least when I go

to Communion; it is more than six months ago that I felt a clear improvement in my bodily health,<sup>13</sup> and that occasionally brought about through raptures, and I find it last sometimes more than three hours, at other times I am much stronger for a whole day; and I do not think it is fancy, for I have considered the matter and reflected on it. Accordingly, when I am thus recollected, I fear no illness. The truth is, that when I pray, as I was accustomed to do before, I feel no improvement.

27. All these things of which I am speaking make me believe that it comes from God; for when I see what I once was, that I was in the way of being lost, and that soon, my soul certainly is astonished at these things, without knowing whence these virtues came to me; I did not know myself, and saw that all was a gift, and not the fruit of my labours. I understand in all truthfulness and sincerity, and see that I am not deluded, that it has been not only the means of drawing me to God in His service, but of saving me also from Hell. This my confessors know, who have heard my general confession.

28. Also, when I see any one who knows anything about me, I wish to let him know my whole life,<sup>14</sup> because my honour seems to me to consist in the honour of our Lord, and I care for nothing else. This He knows well, or I am very blind; for neither honour, nor life, nor praise, nor good either of body or of soul, can interest me, nor do I seek or desire any advantage, only His glory. I cannot believe that Satan has sought so many means of making my soul advance, in order to lose it after all. I do not hold him to be so foolish. Nor can I believe it of God, though I have deserved to fall into delusions because of my sins, that He has left unheeded so many prayers of so many good people for two years, and I do nothing else but ask everybody to pray to our Lord that He would show me

<sup>13</sup> See *Life*, c. xx. § 29.

<sup>14</sup> See *Life*, c. xxxi. § 17.

if this be for His glory, or lead me by another way.<sup>15</sup> I do not believe that these things would have been permitted by His Majesty to be always going on if they were not His work. These considerations, and the reasons of so many saintly men, give me courage when I am under the pressure of fear that they are not from God, I being so wicked myself. But when I am in prayer, and during those days when I am in repose, and my thoughts fixed on God, if all the learned and holy men in the world came together and put me to all conceivable tortures, and I, too, desirous of agreeing with them, they could not make me believe that this is the work of Satan, for I cannot. And when they would have had me believe it, I was afraid, seeing who it was that said so; and I thought that they must be saying what was true, and that I, being what I was, must have been deluded. But all they had said to me was destroyed by the first word, or recollection, or vision that came, and I was able to resist no longer, and believed it was from God.<sup>16</sup>

29. However, I can think that Satan now and then may intermeddle here, and so it is, as I have seen and said; but he produces different results, nor can he, as it seems to me, deceive any one possessed of any experience. Nevertheless, I say that, though I do certainly believe this to be from God, I would never do anything, for any consideration whatever, that is not judged by him who has the charge of my soul to be for the better service of our Lord, and I never had any intention but to obey without concealing anything, for that is my duty. I am very often rebuked for my faults, and that in such a way as to pierce me to the very quick; and I am warned when there is, or when there may be, any danger in what I am doing. These rebukes and warnings have done me much good, in often reminding me of my former sins, which make me exceedingly sorry.

<sup>15</sup> See *Life*, c. xxv. § 20.

<sup>16</sup> See *Life*, c. xxv. § 18.

30. I have been very long, but this is the truth—that when I rise from my prayer, I see that I have received blessings which seem too briefly described. Afterwards I fall into many imperfections, and am unprofitable and very wicked. And perhaps I have no perception of what is good, but am deluded; still, the difference in my life is notorious, and compels me to think over all I have said—I mean, that which I verily believe I have felt. These are the perfections which I feel our Lord has wrought in me, who am so wicked and so imperfect. I refer it all to your judgment, my Father, for you know the whole state of my soul.<sup>17</sup>

The natural sequel to this Relation is the paper which seems almost certainly to be from the hand of St. Peter himself, containing his commentaries on the state of St. Teresa's soul, and intended either to comfort her, or to convince her critics of the Divine origin of the supernatural favours which she received. It is a document embodying the most solid doctrine on the subject. It was found among the papers of St. Teresa in the Convent of the Incarnation at Avila, and the chronicler of the Order does not hesitate to attribute it to St. Peter.

1. The end God has in view is the drawing a soul to Himself; that of the devil is the withdrawing it from God. Our Lord never does anything whereby any one may be separated from Him, and the devil does nothing whereby any one may be made to draw near unto God. All the visions and the other operations in the soul of this person draw her nearer unto God, and make her more humble and obedient.

<sup>17</sup> *The Life of St. Teresa of Jesus*, written by herself. Translated from the Spanish by David Lewis, pp. 373—385.

2. It is the teaching of St. Thomas that an angel of light may be recognized by the peace and quietness he leaves in the soul. She is never visited in this way, but she afterwards abides in peace and joy ; so much so, that all the pleasures of earth together are not comparable to one of these visitations.

3. She never commits a fault, nor falls into an imperfection, without being instantly rebuked by Him Who speaks interiorly to her.

4. She has never prayed for nor wished for them ; all she wishes for is to do the will of God our Lord in all things.

5. Everything herein is consistent with the Scriptures and the teaching of the Church, and most true, according to the most rigorous principles of scholastic theology.

6. This soul is most pure and sincere, with the most fervent desires of being pleasing unto God, and of trampling on every earthly being.

7. She has been told that whatever she shall ask of God, being good, she shall have. She has asked much, and things not convenient to put on paper lest it should be wearisome ; all of which our Lord has granted.

8. When these operations are from God, they are always directed to the good of the recipient, to that of the community, or of some other. That she has profited by them she knows by experience, and she knows it, too, of other persons also.

9. No one converses with her, if he be not in evil dispositions, who is not moved thereby to devotion, even though she says nothing about it.

10. She is growing daily in the perfection of virtues, and learns by these things the way of a higher perfection. And thus, during the whole time in which she had visions, she was making progress, according to the doctrine of St. Thomas.

11. The spirit that speaks to her soul never tells her anything in the way of news, or what is unbecoming, but only that which tends to edification.

12. She has been told of some persons that they were full of devils ; but this was for the purpose of enabling her to understand the state of a soul which has sinned mortally against our Lord.

13. 'The devil's method is, when he attempts to deceive a soul, to advise that soul never to speak of what he says to it ; but the spirit that speaks to this soul warns her to be open with learned men, servants of our Lord, and that the devil may deceive her if she should conceal anything through shame.

14. So great is the progress of her soul in this way, and the edification she ministers in the good example given, that more than forty nuns in her monastery practise great recollection.

15. These supernatural things occur after long praying, when she is absorbed in God, on fire with His love, or at Communion.

16. They kindle in her a most earnest desire to be on the right road, and to escape the delusions of Satan.

17. They are in her the cause of the deepest humility ; she understands that what she receives comes to her from the hand of our Lord, and how little worth she is herself.

18. When they are withheld, anything that occurs is wont to pain and distress her ; but when she is in this state, she remembers nothing ; all she is conscious of is a great longing for suffering, and so great is it that she is amazed at it.

19. They are to her sources of joy and consolation in her troubles, when people speak ill of her, and in her infirmities,—and she has fearful pains about the heart, sicknesses, and many other afflictions, all of which leave her when she has these visions.

20. With all this, she undergoes great penances, fastings, the discipline, and mortifications.

21. All that on earth may give her any pleasure, and her trials, which are many, she bears with equal tranquillity of mind, without losing the peace and quiet of her soul.

22. Her resolution never to offend our Lord is so earnest that she has made a vow never to leave undone what she knows herself, or is told by those who understand the matter better, to be more perfect. And though she holds the members of the Society to be saints, and believes that our Lord made use of them to bestow on her graces so great, she told me that, if she knew it would be more perfect to have nothing more to do with them, she would never speak to them again, nor see them, notwithstanding the fact that it was through them that her mind had been quieted and directed in these things.

23. The sweetnesss she commonly receives, her sense of God, her languishing with love, are certainly marvellous, and through these she is wont to be enraptured the whole day long.

24. She frequently falls into a trance when she hears God spoken of with devotion and earnestness, and cannot resist the rapture, do what she can; and in that state her appearance is such that she excites very great devotion.

25. She cannot bear to be directed by any one who will not tell her of her faults and rebuke her; all that she accepts with great humility.

26. Moreover, she cannot endure people who are in a state of perfection, if they do not labour to become perfect, according to the spirit of their rule.

27. She is most detached from her kindred, has no desire to converse with people, and loves solitude. She has a great devotion to the saints, and on their feasts, and on the days on which the Church celebrates the mysteries of the faith, is filled with most fervent affections for our Lord.



28. If all the members of the Society, and all the servants of God upon earth, tell her that her state is an effect of the operations of Satan, or were to say so, she is in fear and trembling before the visions occur ; but as soon as she is in prayer, and recollected, she cannot be persuaded, were they to tear her into a thousand pieces, that it is any other than God Who is working in her and speaking to her.

29. God has given her a most wonderfully strong and valiant spirit : she was once timid ; now she tramples on all the evil spirits. She has put far away from herself all the littleness and silliness of women ; she is singularly free from scruples, and most sincere.

30. Besides, our Lord has given her the gift of most sweet tears, great compassion for her neighbours, the knowledge of her own faults, a great reverence for good people, and self-abasement ; and I am certain that she has done good to many, of whom I am one.

31. She is continually reminding herself of God, and has a sense of His presence. All the locutions have been verified, and every one of them accomplished ; and this is a very great test.

32. Her visions are a source of great clearness in her understanding, and an admirable illumination in the things of God.

33. It was said to her that she should lead those who were trying her spirit to look into the Scriptures, and that they would not find that any soul desirous of pleasing God had been so long deceived.

It may be remarked that the writer of these notes, whether he was St. Peter of Alcantara himself, or some Father of the Society of Jesus, was evidently well informed—not only as to St. Teresa herself, but also as to matters connected with the community in

which she lived and others with whom she conversed. St. Peter may have been informed on such matters by Father Balthasar Alvarez. The notes themselves show that no one could have conversed with Teresa who was not the better for it, unless his own evil disposition hindered him from gaining benefit. Although nothing is said in the Relation by St. Teresa concerning her vow always to do what appeared most perfect, this is mentioned in the notes. The remark that she cannot bear to be directed by any one who does not point out to her her faults, may very likely have come from Father Balthasar. The mention of her detachment from her kindred, her devotion to the saints, her compassion for her neighbours, the good effect of her conversation on many particular persons, "of whom," says the writer, "I am one," and also the influence of her example on the community, in which it is said that more than forty nuns practised great recollection, points to the same source of information. Nor will any one familiar with the rules for the Discernment of Spirits laid down by St. Ignatius in the Spiritual Exercises, fail to see that the direction given in these "notes" is the same as his; although this would certainly in no way disprove that St. Peter of Alcantara may have written them.

The holy Reformer of the Franciscans went on his way from Avila rejoicing, as we may well believe, at what he had seen of Teresa, and at the work which he had been able to do for her, both in the way of comforting and encouraging her, and of defending her from the storm of narrow-minded criticism by which she had been assailed, and which

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had troubled her so greatly. The effects of his visit were in many respects permanent, especially in the great light which his own experience in the matter of prayer had enabled him to impart to her on the same subject. Others were less likely to retain for long the impressions which he had left. He had silenced them, but not convinced them, and as the memory of the charm and power of his presence lost its freshness, their old thoughts and ways of judging would resume their sway. It is certain that before long Teresa was again the subject of hostile criticism, and that our Lord permitted her to be tried to the utmost by that kind of dryness and interior gloom which she has so well described in the Relation lately quoted, though her later experiences of it seem to have made her speak still more graphically in that part of her Life which relates to this period, after the first visit of St. Peter of Alcantara to Avila.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *Further trials.*

IT is certain that during the interval of which we have to speak St. Teresa suffered very great trials either in body or soul, and often in both at once. She gives a long description of these trials in that part of the account of herself to which we have now come. It seems as if our Lord had determined to prepare her by personal experience to assist others in every kind of spiritual anguish, before He called her forth from her religious cell to labour for Him in the sight of the world. Her description of the variety of her trials is very instructive—the false humility which made her forget all that God had done for her, and look on herself as the cause of all the evils and heresies by which the Church was then afflicted, issuing as it did in restlessness, discomfort, trouble, and obscurity: the utter torpor of the soul which the devil is allowed sometimes to produce, and with which he used to afflict her sometimes at the time of festivals and holy seasons to which she had an especial devotion, when the understanding and will seem to be in fetters, when the soul loses all power of thinking of anything but the absurdities which he puts before it, when even reason is dull, faith and all

the virtues seem to be asleep, temptations throng in one upon another, love is tepid, vocal prayer and solitude become afflictions, holy reading impossible, conversation with others spoilt by a sort of snappishness which seizes the soul, recourse even to Superiors useless, because they are tempted to scold and reprove, and the soul has, in short, no help at all from any one but God, Who at times, as after Communion, consoles it and calms it, or vouchsafes a word, perhaps a vision, which dispels the whole darkness at once.

She tells us that she used, in the troubles of which we are now speaking, to try to occupy herself with external works. She enlarges on the mischief done to our nature by original sin, which has deprived us of the power of keeping our minds fixed on the objects of prayer and contemplation. She found the books which had been written on the subject of prayer of little use to her at this time—she had passed, as it seems, through all that they described, and she began reading the *Lives of the Saints* instead. All the time she had a great love for God and for His service.

At one time [she says] I laugh at myself: and at another, I am very much distressed. The inward stirring of my love urges me to rise to do something for the service of God; and I am not able to do more than adorn pictures with boughs and flowers, clean or arrange an oratory, or some such trifling acts, so that I am ashamed of myself. If I undertook any penitential practice, the whole was so slight, and was done in such a way, that if our Lord did not accept my good-will, I saw it was all worthless, and so I laughed at myself. The failure of bodily strength

sufficient to do something for God is no light affliction for those souls to whom He, in His goodness, has communicated the fire of His love in its fulness.<sup>1</sup>

St. Teresa goes on in the same part of her work to relate a number of external pains and troubles inflicted on her by Satan. It must always be remembered that she is an eminently digressive writer, and that, in the work from which we are so largely quoting, she is not writing an autobiography properly so called. She is in no way bound to follow the order of events, and it suits her purpose to group under one head incidents similar to each other which really occurred at very different periods in her experience. Thus we cannot be certain that all the interior trials of which we have just been speaking were suffered by her in the interval of time which ensued between the visit of St. Peter of Alcantara to Avila and the point of her life in which she conceived the idea of founding her first convent. We may safely conclude that this period was a time in which she suffered greatly after this manner, and that is all. In the same way, as to the external pains and fears inflicted on her by Satan, it is not certain that all that are related in this part of her *Life* occurred at this time, although we may take it as an undoubted truth that she suffered then much in this way also. Our preliminary remark is necessary for the right understanding of the chapter from which we are now to draw.<sup>2</sup>

Once when she was in an oratory, Satan appeared, in an abominable shape, on her left hand. "I looked

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, c. xxx.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, c. xxxi.

at his mouth, in particular, because he spoke, and it was horrible. A huge flame seemed to issue out of his body, perfectly bright, without any shadow. He spoke in a fearful way, and said to me that, though I had escaped out of his hands, he would yet lay hold of me again. I was in great terror, made the sign of the Cross as well as I could, and then the form vanished, but it reappeared instantly. This occurred twice. I did not know what to do: there was some holy water at hand; I took some, and threw it in the direction of the figure, and then Satan never returned." Another time, she was tortured for five hours together with inward and outward pains, which frightened those who were beside her. It was her wont, under such trials, to make interior acts, asking for patience, and then to be let to suffer on even to the end of the world. "I saw close beside me a most frightful little negro, gnashing his teeth in despair at losing what he attempted to seize. When I saw him, I laughed, and had no fear; for there were some present who were helpless, and knew of no means whereby so great a pain could be relieved. My body, head, and arms were violently shaken; I could not help myself; but the worst of all was the interior pain."

It is here that she relates her experience of the power of holy water over the devils. Nothing, she says, puts them to flight like holy water. The sign of the Cross chases them away for a moment only. "As my pains did not cease, I told them [the nuns who were with her] if they would not laugh, I would ask for some holy water. They brought me some,

and sprinkled me with it, but I was no better. I then threw some myself in the direction of the negro, when he fled in a moment. All my sufferings ceased, just as if some one had taken them from me with his hand; only I was wearied, as if I had been beaten with many blows. It was of great service to me to learn that if, by our Lord's permission, Satan can do so much evil to a soul and body not in his power, he can do much more when he has them in his possession."<sup>3</sup>

About this time, as it would seem, another incident occurred not quite unlike that of the conversion of the priest of evil life which has already been mentioned. A priest came to her who had been living in the habit of an abominable mortal sin for two years, without having courage to confess it, and without abstaining from saying Mass. She undertook to pray for him, and to get others to do the same. He made his confession and then wrote to St. Teresa to say that he had abstained from his sin for some days, but was so tormented by the temptation that he felt as if he were already in Hell. She asked the nuns and others to pray for him, and implored God that his torments and temptations might cease, and that the devils might be permitted to torment her instead of him, provided that she did not offend God. She suffered most grievously for a month, while the poor priest was delivered from the temptation. He continued free, and was wonderfully grateful to her for her heroic charity. Here she adds the instruction that Satan loses force and strength when

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, xxx. 3, 4.



he is despised. She mentions also an occasion on which he came and sat on her office-book, to prevent her finishing her Office, and was chased away by holy water. Another time she saw, in the choir, a great fight between evil spirits and the angels. Soon after there arose a great dispute in the house between persons given to prayer and others not so given, which lasted a long time. Another time, a great multitude of evil spirits surrounded her, but she was encompassed by a great light which kept them off.

Sometimes she was tormented by the thought that the memories of former faults were a sign that she was in the power of Satan. Her confessor delivered her from this. Another time she was tormented because she was spoken well of and highly praised. Our Lord asked her, when she was afraid that the marvellous graces vouchsafed to her might become known, what she was afraid of? Those who believed in the truth of these gifts would glorify Him, those who did not believe would condemn her unjustly. In each case she was a gainer. She was tempted to leave her convent for another, where enclosure was more strictly enforced, and where she would be unknown; but her confessor would not let her. Another extreme into which she fell, as she says, was to pray that those who saw any good in her might also be acquainted with her sins. This her confessor checked.

All these little fears and distresses [she adds] and semblances of humility, I now see clearly were mere imperfections, and the result of my unmortified life. For a soul left in the hands of God cares nothing about evil or good

report, if it clearly comprehends, when our Lord is pleased to bestow upon it His grace, that it has nothing of its own. Let it trust the Giver—it will know hereafter why He reveals His gifts—and prepare itself for persecution, which in these times is sure to come, when it is our Lord's will it should be known of any one that He bestows upon him graces such as these: for a thousand eyes are watching that soul, while a thousand souls of another order are observed by none.<sup>4</sup>

The one good thing in the world, she says, is that it tolerates no faults in good people, and helps on their perfection by its complaints against them. Martyrdom is over in a moment, but perfection cannot be ordinarily obtained except by a long struggle. But the world finds out a person who begins to aim at perfection and a thousand leagues off detects in him a fault, which after all may be a virtue. The critics have the same faults themselves, but that does not stop their mouths. "Though the poor soul has not yet begun to walk, the world will have it fly, and though its passions be not wholly overcome, men will have it that they must be under restraint, even upon trying occasions, as those of the saints are after they are confirmed in grace."

She goes on in her characteristic way to point out the danger of listening to the suggestions of discouragement which come to persons who aim at perfection and find themselves very imperfect. They must not distress themselves, all can be gained by prayer by and by, if they do not lose confidence. She found out, she says, when put to the test, that

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, c. xxxi. 18.

she was not so detached from her relations as she had thought. Good people are not to be put out because of such discoveries. Their distress comes from the evil of lingering self-respect.

Let our self-respect be ever so slight, it will have the same result as the missing of a note on the organ when it is played—the whole music is out of tune. It is a thing which hurts the soul exceedingly in every way, but it is a pestilence in the way of prayer.<sup>5</sup>

Those who seek to follow the counsels of Christ are inconsistent if they wish to keep their reputation and credit untouched. She goes on to mention some victories of her own in this kind of self-conquest. She used to be afraid of letting her defects as to the performance of choir duties be seen or known, but she determined to make no secret of them, and to ask for help.

When I began to be indifferent about its being known that I could not sing very well, it gave me no pain at all, and I sang much better: even when I know a thing, and yet am very slightly in doubt about it, I ask the children. I have lost neither honour nor credit by it—on the contrary, I believe our Lord has been pleased to strengthen my memory.<sup>6</sup>

It is certainly very remarkable that the last and, in some sense, the crowning grace vouchsafed by our Lord to St. Teresa, in this preparation of her soul for the great work which He was about to commit to her, should have been of this nature. The spiritual energies of the saints have often been kindled to

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, c. xxxi. 24.

<sup>6</sup> *Life*, c. xxxi. 26.

their utmost intensity by their being allowed a supernatural insight into some of the great realities, as to which our present perceptions are ordinarily so dull—the beauty of the soul, the value of grace, Heaven, Purgatory, or the Passion of our Lord. Faith sets before us many truths which are in themselves very terrible, and the mere thought of death, judgment, or eternity has, in many well-known cases, when driven home, as it were, by a powerful stroke of extraordinary grace, been enough to make a saint. In the case of St. Teresa, after all the wonderful revelations which had been vouchsafed to her, many of them so entrancing in their beauty, it might have been expected that her soul would be led on by still higher illumination as to the magnificence and grandeur of our Lord. But He chose that it should be no vision of beauty which should close for a time the series of His graces in this kind to her. She was to have, in a very true sense, the apostolical vocation, the same zeal for the salvation of souls which burnt in the heart of Dominic or Ignatius, which sent St. Francis Xavier so many thousands of leagues across the ocean to India and to Japan. She and her spiritual children were not to leave their cloister. Their warfare for the honour of God was to be waged in prayer, the discipline of their own souls, and the perfect observance of their holy rule. But they were, nevertheless, to be among the most efficient of the labourers of the Church, and thousands and thousands of souls were to owe their conversion and their salvation to the prayers of these unknown recluses. For such a work, as well as for her own

advancement in spiritual perfection, and in her love of and gratitude to God, it was fitting that St. Teresa should be numbered among those saints on whom the motive of holy fear of God's justice has been enforced, by a preternatural insight into the character of the punishments which await those who offend Him.

I was one day in prayer [she says] when I found myself in a moment, without knowing it, plunged apparently into Hell. I understood that it was our Lord's will I should see the place which the devils kept in readiness for me, and which I had deserved by my sins. It was but a moment, but it seems to me impossible I should ever forget it, even if I were to live many years. The entrance seemed to be by a long and narrow pass, like a furnace, very low, dark, and close. The ground seemed to be saturated with water, mere mud, exceedingly foul, sending forth pestilential odours, and covered with loathsome vermin. At the end was a hollow place in the wall, like a closet, and in that I saw myself confined. All this was even pleasant to behold, in comparison with what I felt there.<sup>7</sup>

She says she cannot describe what she felt. There was a fire in her soul. She suffered unendurably in the body. All that she had suffered in diseases, or in what Satan had been allowed to inflict upon her, was as nothing in comparison, and she saw there was to be no intermission, no end to the pain. But the pains of the body were as nothing to the pains of the soul. She describes the anguish as a sense of oppression and stifling in the soul, all the while tearing itself to pieces with remorse and despair.

<sup>7</sup> *Life*, c. xxxii. 1, 2.

"The inward fire and despair are the greatest torments of all." She was immured in this place, unable to move, hemmed in on every side, with no light, no power of breathing. This was her first vision of Hell.

Afterwards our Lord let her see more. She saw the punishments of various sins, most horrible to look at, but she did not feel them herself. She understood that it was a great compassion of our Lord to let her see from what He had saved her. The vision in its terrific character went far beyond all that she had read or heard of the place of torment. When she wrote her account of it, six years afterwards, the actual warmth of her body was chilled with fear as she wrote. Ever after her vision, she counted as nothing all that can be suffered in this world. Thus she esteemed it as one of the greatest mercies she had ever received, for it destroyed in her all fear of trouble and contradiction on earth. She was strengthened to endure anything, in thanksgiving to God Who had delivered her from such pains. She was greatly frightened when she remembered how little fruit she had drawn before from books and meditations on Hell.

Another effect of the vision was an immense distress at the number of souls that are lost, especially of the heretics of the day, who still are members of the Church by Baptism, and also a most vehement thirst for their salvation. To save even one, she would willingly have endured many deaths. No heart, she says, can bear to endure the grievous pain of seeing any one in danger of such torments for ever.

She reflects that the place which was shown her as prepared for herself, though less terrible than she had deserved, was so fearful in its effects on her, although she had tried to serve God and had been free from many great faults; so that "no soul should take either rest or pleasure that is liable to fall every moment into mortal sin."

It would seem that, either at this or at some other time, she had also some very intense perception imparted to her of the greatness of the happiness of the Blessed. The effect on her was to make her long for the means of doing penance for the evil she had done, and of meriting the great good which had been revealed to her. She wished to avoid all society, and withdraw entirely from the world.

I was in spirit restless, yet my restlessness was not harassing, but rather pleasant. I saw clearly that it was the work of God, and that His Majesty had furnished my soul with fervour, so that I might be able to digest other and stronger food than I had been accustomed to eat. I tried to think what I could do for God, and thought that the first thing was to follow my vocation to a religious life, which His Majesty had given me, by keeping my rule in the greatest perfection possible.<sup>8</sup>

Thus it was that St. Teresa was finally prepared for the great work which she was to accomplish in the Church of God. The vision of Hell generated in her heart the burning desire to contribute to the salvation of souls. When a child, she had thought of setting out to the land of the infidel with the desire of confessing her faith and of sealing her con-

<sup>8</sup> *Life*, c. xxxii. 11.

fession by martyrdom. Now her zeal was for the salvation of others. But she had no delusions as to her mission in this respect. The preaching of the Gospel, the instruction of converts, the administration of the sacraments and of the Word of God, were not for her. She was to fight for God in prayer, and the power of her prayer was to be founded upon her faithfulness to her own obligations. The Carmel in which she was living was to be her field of suffering and of warfare for God's glory. At first, she may have had no further idea than that of perfect fidelity to the "Mitigated Observance" under which she had been trained, and to which her vows pledged her. But it is clear that with a soul like hers, on fire with Divine love, the desire of returning to the more perfect observance of the Primitive Rule was certain, in due time, to absorb all her devotion and all her energy.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### *First projects of Reform.*

THE student of the life of St. Teresa has again and again to remind himself that, in some respects, he suffers from what is, in other respects, his greatest gain. It is his greatest gain that the Saint has left behind her so much, which no one but herself could have written, concerning her own career, and it is also a loss that she is so reserved about all those external circumstances of her life which might so well have been related by another who had watched and lived with her. It has already been remarked that we know comparatively little about the interior of the Convent of the Incarnation, the daily companions and occupations of the Saint who was to make that convent famous over the whole world, how she stood with her Superiors, who those Superiors were, what charges she may have occupied, what were the characteristics of her conversation and ways of acting, as they struck those with whom what time her rule allowed her for recreation was usually spent. We know how charming her conversation was thought to be by the "externs" who visited her, what an influence she could exercise for good, even over souls that had for a time hardened themselves in sin. We

know that more than forty of her Sisters in religion “practised great recollection,” and we may well gather from this that the contagion of her example had spread widely, even among others besides those who followed that example most closely. We know that when, in course of time, she began to found her convents, some of her first companions came from the Convent of the Incarnation, and that from time to time she drew others to follow her example as she proceeded with her foundations. She had many relatives among the inmates of the convent, whether as boarders or as religious, and not a few, it would seem, who loved her as if they were her relatives. The name of one faithful friend in particular, Juana Suarez, is inseparably connected with hers. But, as far as the Saint herself informs us, we hear but very little indeed of the esteem in which Doña Teresa de Ahumada was held by the mass of her religious Sisters, of the influence she exercised on them for good, or of the intimacies, as far as intimacies can be allowed under such conditions, which she contracted within the walls of the convent itself.

This is, no doubt, as we have hinted, mainly to be attributed to the reserve with which she always speaks of herself, except on those points on which she is bound to be unreserved. She was not writing her *Life*. She had one great object in her Relations—and the *Life*, as it is called, is but a long Relation—namely, the object of making herself clear to the confessors who had to guide her, and of putting on record the marvellous mercies of God in the

interior history of her soul. At the same time, it must be remembered, that the very difficulties, under which the life of recollection had to be maintained in the Convent of the Incarnation, must have driven the Saint in upon herself as far as this was possible to her. Many years after this time, writing to a religious of another Order, with the purpose of confirming her in her vocation, she declares that though there were a hundred and eighty religious in her convent, she lived among them as if she had been alone with God in the house. But there were special difficulties in her way at the Convent of the Incarnation. It was poorly founded, and in consequence the Superiors found it hard to maintain the inmates. This led to the reception of girls as boarders for the purpose of education, and it also led to the frequent absences of many of the nuns, who were permitted, on the application of their friends, to pass sometimes even long periods away from their cloister.

It is remarkable how God in His providence overruled these irregularities, as they would now be deemed, for good, in the case of St. Teresa herself; for without these it would hardly have been possible for her to carry out the work of the first convent of the Reform. Nor must it be supposed that the Convent of the Incarnation was relaxed, in the sense in which that word characterizes a community habitually unobservant of the rules by which it is bound. The whole Order of Mount Carmel, at the time of which we are speaking, was living according to that mitigation of the Primitive Rule which had been solemnly sanctioned by the Holy See. The religious, there-

fore, were not bound to more than they practised, nor was there any reason why the service of God should not have been carried out with very great personal perfection by any one, or by all. But apart from this consideration, it is clear that in the multitude of inmates, not all of whom were religious, the changes in the community produced by the frequent absences of some of its members, the difficulties caused by the great poverty of the house, and other similar causes, must have operated powerfully in loosening the ties of discipline, and in making it more possible for even a saint, like Teresa, to be comparatively unappreciated by the majority of her religious Sisters.

It is certain, however, if only from what has already been mentioned, that she had a considerable band of devoted friends inside the walls of the "Incarnation," as well as outside them. We have now come to the point of time when the design of the reform of her Order—or rather, of the foundation of some one or two convents in which the Primitive Rule might be practised in its integrity—began to assume shape and to become her definite object of prayer and labour. We know that St. Teresa could not now converse of anything but God, and the interests of His glory; and she herself, in her characteristic humility, has spoken of the good she was able to produce in the souls of the friends whom she was so frequently sent to visit, by repeating to them the instructions which she had received from her confessor, as a sort of compensation for the evil of those visits themselves. If she spoke in this way outside

the convent, it is not likely that she would be silent on the same subjects in her conversations within its walls. She would not do less good there than outside. It is natural to think that the project of which her heart was now full, must have found its way to her lips in many a quiet talk with her intimates among the nuns or with her own family, before the occasion which has been so often spoken of by writers of her life as having brought the matter to the point of action.

She had in the convent, as Ribera tells us, a niece called Maria de Ocampo, a girl, it seems, of sixteen or seventeen. She was not remarkable for her devotional or religious tastes. On the contrary, she was a simple girl enough, fond of dress, and ingenious in the devices to which she had recourse for making herself conspicuous in that way. One afternoon, we are told, she was with her aunt in her cell. It was a day famous in the annals of the Reform—the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, July 16, 1560. There was quite a little company there, a younger sister of Maria de Ocampo, named Maria Eleanora, Inez and Anne de Tapia, St. Teresa's cousins, and the ever faithful friend, Juana Suarez. They were talking of the delights of solitude, and of the difficulty of living in recollection in a convent so largely populated as that in which they then were. It was a pleasant, almost sportive conversation, without any deep serious purpose. Then the young Maria de Ocampo spoke with an air of greater seriousness. "Let us all of us here now go and live another life of greater

solitude, like the hermits." The idea was caught up as if spoken by the inspiration of God. It was said that, after all, the thing might be done, and the means of the accomplishment of the design were discussed. Then once more Maria de Ocampo declared that she would willingly give a thousand ducats of her fortune for the first expenses. She had hardly said the words before our Lord appeared to her, and seemed to testify to her His gratitude and affection. She made the resolution at once to become a religious, but she had yet more than one trial to pass through before the design was accomplished.

St. Teresa was delighted—all the more for her tender love for Maria. Here was the very thing wanted for the satisfaction of her long cherished wishes, to the realization of which she had hardly before this looked forward. She mentioned the conversation to her friend Guiomar de Ulloa. "What do you think those girls have been talking about? Nothing less than of founding a little convent in which we might live like the Barefooted Franciscanesses." At this time there was a convent of Reformed Franciscanesses at Madrid, which was in great repute for strictness of observance. Doña Guiomar took up the idea heartily, and began at once to scheme for the foundation of the new house. St. Teresa herself was surprised when the matter seemed to become practical. It was all very well to plan for a home of greater retirement and recollection—but, on the other hand, she was very happy where she was, she loved her community, her cell, and all around her, her

heart was always open to affection and fearful of being ungrateful, and she felt some pain at the thought of leaving those among whom she had lived so long. It was agreed that all the party should commend the matter earnestly to God in prayer.

One day [she tells us] after Communion, our Lord commanded me to labour with all my might for this end. He made me great promises—that the monastery would certainly be built, that He would take great delight in it; that it should be called St. Joseph's; that St. Joseph would keep guard at one door, and our Lady at the other; that Christ would be in the midst of us; that the monastery would be a star shining in great splendour; that though the Religious Orders were relaxed then, I was not to suppose that He was scantily served in them—for, what would become of the world, if there were no religious in it? I was to tell my confessor what He commanded me, and that He asked him not to oppose nor thwart me in the matter.<sup>1</sup>

She says that the effect of this vision on her was so great, that she could not possibly doubt that the words came from our Lord. Nevertheless, her repugnances grew on her. She was now commanded to undertake this work, and yet she foresaw that it would cost her an immensity of trouble and disquiet. Our Lord reiterated His command, and Teresa wrote down the vision and sent the account to Father Balthasar Alvarez. Father Balthasar thought that the scheme was impossible. Nevertheless, he did not absolutely forbid it, but advised St. Teresa to lay the matter before the Provincial of the Carmelites,

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, c. xxxii. 14.

Father Angelo de Salazar. His opposition to it was probable, and would be conclusive. Doña Guiomar went to the Provincial and informed him of the design. Father Angelo saw no objection. He was pleased at the thought of a reform in his Order, like that which had been accomplished in others, and he promised to take the new house under his own jurisdiction.

It seems that some little time before this the two friends had written to St. Peter of Alcantara on the subject, and had received the most encouraging answer. He said they were on no account to give up their design. They applied about the same time, as it appears, to another Saint of the day, St. Luis Bertrand, then Master of Novices at the Dominican Convent of Valentia. He took three or four months to commend the matter to God in prayer, and then wrote to Teresa bidding her go on without fear. "Mother Teresa," he wrote, "I have received your letter. As the business about which you have consulted me belongs greatly to the service of God, I thought it right first to commend it in my tepid prayers and sacrifices to His Divine Majesty. This is the reason why I delayed answering you. Now in the Name of our Lord I tell you that you are to take courage for the undertaking of so great a work, and that God will help you and favour you. In His Name I tell you also that fifty years will not pass before your Order will be one of the most illustrious which the Church of God possesses."

So far, the plan seemed fairly launched, but soon opposition was awakened. As is usually the case,



this came from good people. The same little set of pious persons, it would appear, who had been so very sure that all Teresa's visions came from the evil one, were now equally alarmed at this new project. But they were not alone. The matter got out in the city, and St. Vincent de Paul has left it on record that a good work talked about is already half defeated. The world in general—such a world as there was in Avila—began to discuss Teresa and her designs of reform. She was well enough off, they said, in the Convent of the Incarnation. Who was she, that she was not satisfied? A fine notion, indeed, to reform an Order like that of our Lady! All sorts of amusing and satirical things were said of her and her friend. It was not simple satire—there was a steady undercurrent of dislike to strictness and severity of observance, which gave a sort of bitterness to the opposition. It amounted to a kind of persecution. On Christmas Day, Doña Guiomar de Ulloa was refused absolution unless she would promise to have nothing to do with the plan, which was considered as scandalous, on the ground of the reflection it cast upon so many good religious, as if, forsooth, they did not keep sufficiently strict rule. Our Lord told Teresa that now she might understand what the founders of Orders had had to undergo—and that she had more severe trials still awaiting her. Ribera tells us that the whole city was against her and her friends—but that they of set purpose forbore to try to get the Fathers of the Society to help them, because the Society had been so short a time established in Avila, and was so poor and

ill-furnished with friends, that it might have been itself injured if it had taken the unpopular side.

However, if the Jesuits were weak, the Dominicans were strong. So Teresa and Doña Guiomar betook themselves to the Dominican Monastery, and sought the advice of a well-known Father there, Peter Ybañez. He was a man greatly respected both for his virtue and great innocence of life and his learning, and he was a man of great experience in mystical theology. They laid their plan before him and asked his advice. Teresa did with him as she was accustomed to do when she asked advice as to a matter which had been the subject of visions, that is, she said nothing about any Divine communications which she had received, and simply spoke of the reasons which there might be for the plan proposed. Thus she avoided all question about the nature and source of her visions, and left her counsellors in perfect liberty to form their judgment on purely human grounds.

Father Ybañez was, at first sight, inclined to take the common view of the plan submitted to him. But he asked for a week in which he might consider it and recommend it to God. He had hardly given this answer, when he received a message from a gentleman of the city, warning him against having anything to do with such a scheme. But when he began to commend the matter faithfully to God, he could not help looking at it favourably. He saw that it might produce great glory to God, and he determined to do all in his power to further it. He told Teresa and her friend not to give it up. On

the contrary, they were to get it out of hand as quickly as possible. He told them how to set to work. He said it was quite true that their revenues were at present insufficient, but that they must trust something to Providence in things of that sort. He added also that he would gladly undertake to give an answer to the objections which might be made.

Teresa and Doña Guiomar were thus greatly consoled. At the same time, the good people who had been so violent against them at first, began to come round. They were even ready to help. It seemed as if the battle was gained. Our Lord had told Teresa to get into the house as fast as she could, and in whatever way she could, and that then she should see what He would do. So they bought a small house on the spot on which the convent was actually opened, and began to think that they might soon see it occupied by religious.

The contract was nearly signed, when a change came over the aspect of affairs. The Provincial of the Carmelites, as has been said, had given his promise of support, but he had since heard of the strong opposition to the scheme. He was quite sure to be made the object of energetic remonstrances, and to be held responsible to public opinion for the kind of shock which might be involved in the novelty of the project, as well as for any inconveniences or troubles which might ensue from the attempt, whether it failed or succeeded. No doubt, prudence was on the safe side of preventing the hazardous undertaking altogether. So Father Angelo withdrew the consent he had given. The revenues,

he said, were not sufficient, nor, such as they were, were they certain. Besides, the enterprise would have great opposition to encounter. The decision of the Provincial was followed by an injunction to Teresa from Father Balthasar Alvarez not to occupy herself any further with the business. She had laboured much to bring the matter to the point at which it was, so near completion, when these changes took place, but she resigned herself with the utmost peace of mind to the commands of her Superior and her guide. This command of Father Balthasar may have been dictated by his own timidity and extreme prudence, but it is also very probable that he was himself acting under the authority of his Rector, Father Denys Vasquez, who was a man eminent both for learning and for virtue, but, at the same time, somewhat severe and peremptory with those under him. It will be seen that, under different circumstances, Father Balthasar was ready to encourage Teresa instead of checking her. But the opposition of the Provincial of the Carmelites made it almost impossible for him now to act in any other way.

As was to be expected, the decision of the Provincial did not put a stop to the tempest of tongues which was now raging against Teresa. If she had succeeded, she would no doubt have been exposed to all the obloquy which afterwards fell on her. But to have it known that she had designed what she had designed, and had failed, was almost worse. Some of the pious people who had opposed the scheme were merciless, now that it seemed to have

come to nothing. Had they not said so? Then the good nuns of the Incarnation had been affronted for nothing. Teresa was to live on among them, after having seemed to want to quit their company as if it were not good enough for her; the more they had really valued and loved her, the more ungrateful did she appear. But there was yet a further blow, of which she had already felt the weight, and which might very possibly recur again. Father Balthasar wrote to say that now she must see that all her visions about this matter were dreams. But if this was so, would not doubt be once again thrown on the whole subject of her prayer? She had had no visions which were more certain than these. So, when Father Balthasar said this, and bade her abandon the whole design on account of the scandal it had occasioned, she began again to be in the state of perplexity in which she had before suffered so much. Her interior peace was not really shaken. The confidence that she had but attempted to carry out the commands of our Lord Himself did not forsake her. But there were moments when the old trouble, caused by her great diffidence in herself and her sense of her own unworthiness, returned.

However, while St. Teresa was suffering this state of anxiety our Lord again comforted her. He told her not to afflict herself. She had rendered Him a great service, and had not offended Him at all. For the moment she was to do as her confessor told her, until the time came for the affair once more to be taken in hand. Her mind was filled with consolation.

But our Lord went on caressing and strengthening her. She was the object of His special favours, as it seemed, during this interval, when all her hopes seemed lost, and when there was even a question raised as to the punishment which should be inflicted on her for her audacity. What the "prison" in the Convent of the Incarnation may have been we do not quite know—probably it meant some kind of solitary confinement. This was thought of for her. At the same time her spiritual graces were increased—the love of God, and other gifts, grew sensibly. She was overpowered by the "impetuosities," as she calls them, of Divine love, and her trances and ecstasies were frequent.

Teresa herself, as has been stated, obeyed her confessor exactly, and thus she did nothing at all for the advancement of the project of the foundation as long as his prohibition lasted. But he could not touch others. Doña Guiomar and Fra Ybañez had taken the matter up, and the lady and her mother had written to Rome to obtain the necessary permission from the Holy See. But St. Teresa took advantage of the friendship which she had formed with Fra Ybañez to communicate to him her state and method of prayer, and to submit the whole question concerning it to his judgment. He carefully considered everything, and gave her the fullest sanction and approval. It is to the injunction of this good friar that we owe it that St. Teresa first wrote the work which we have so often quoted as her *Life*.

In this manner five or six months passed away,

months very necessary indeed for the execution of the project of the new foundation, for nothing could be done effectually without an answer from Rome. After the lapse of this time, a change came over the prospects of the foundation. This was produced, in the first instance, by the arrival of a new Rector at the house of the Society of Jesus at Avila. As has been said, Father Balthasar Alvarez was not the Superior of the residence. His Rector could control his actions, and it was very possibly in consequence of the opposition of Father Denys Vasquez, who had hitherto been his Superior, that he had commanded St. Teresa to give up her design. A change of Rector at St. Giles', therefore, was of great importance in the matter of which we are speaking. The new Rector, Father Gaspar de Salazar, might bring about a change. Our Lord told St. Teresa in her prayer, about this time, not to afflict herself, for the trouble would soon finish. She had thought that she was soon to die, and was rejoiced at the thought of so soon seeing God. But this was not yet to be. On the arrival of Father Gaspar, Father Balthasar Alvarez ordered her to lay her soul entirely open to him. She did this with her usual frankness and humility, and the Father was charmed at the great things which were thus revealed to him. He understood her completely, and gave her every possible encouragement and consolation.

St. Teresa speaks in the highest terms of this good religious.

When I went into the confessional [she says] I felt in my soul something, I know not what. I do not remember

to have felt so either before or after towards any one. I cannot tell what it was, nor do I know of anything with which I could compare it. It was a spiritual joy, and a conviction in my soul that his soul must understand mine, that it was in unison with it, and yet, as I have said, I know not how. If I had ever spoken to him, or had heard great things of him, it would have been nothing out of the way that I should rejoice in the conviction that he would understand me; but he had never spoken to me before, nor I to him, and indeed he was a person of whom I had no previous knowledge whatever. Afterwards I saw clearly that my spirit was not deceived, for my relations with him were in every way of the utmost service to me and my soul, because his method of direction in prayer is proper for those persons whom our Lord seems to have led far on the way, seeing that he makes them run and not to crawl step by step. His plan is to render them thoroughly detached and mortified, and our Lord has endowed him with the highest gifts herein, as well as in many other things beside. As soon as I began to have to do with him I knew his method at once, and saw that he had a pure and holy soul, with a special grace of our Lord for the discernment of spirits. He gave me great consolation.<sup>2</sup>

Instead of restraining Father Balthasar, Father Gaspar de Salazar bade him console her, and let the Spirit of God act freely in her soul.

This injunction related to the general conduct of the confessor with his penitent. As to the particular matter of the foundation of the new convent, if Father Gaspar was not convinced at first, he was soon persuaded that it would be wrong to oppose a plan so full of promise for the glory of God. Our

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, c. xxxiii. 11, 12.



Lord suggested many good reasons for Teresa to submit to these two Fathers. She tells us in particular, how she was told by Him to bid Father Balthasar make his meditation, one morning, on the verse of the ninety-first Psalm—*Quam magnificata sunt opera tua, Domine, nimis profundæ factæ sunt cogitationes tuæ!* Father Balthasar did as he was asked, and he saw at once that God would do great and marvellous things, in His own way, by means of this foundation, by a simple unaided woman. He wrote to Teresa to withdraw his prohibition, and to bid her once more occupy herself with the plan.

The command was not altogether welcome. She had spent these months in great peace, and had devoted herself to her own advance in perfection. They had been months of singular happiness and profit. Now once more there was this weary work of dealing with men, and seeking material means for the foundation. Moreover, she had no reason to suppose that the hostility, of which so much has been said, was likely to die away. The opposition of the Provincial of the Carmelites still remained. The nuns of the Incarnation were not likely to forgive her, nor the good people of Avila to hold their tongues. However, she was never wanting in courage or obedience. She began as secretly as she could to get together the necessary funds. The house was still for sale. If she attempted to carry out the purchase herself, she was quite certain of opposition. So she begged her sister, Juana de Ahumada, who had been some few years married to Juan de Ovalle at Alba, to come to Avila and

make the purchase as if for herself. Juan de Ovalle came at once and bought the house. His wife soon followed. It was in August of 1561. Then it was arranged that, with the leave of the Provincial, Teresa should go to spend some time with her sister, and she was thus enabled to direct the works which were at once begun for the transformation of the little house into the Convent of St. Joseph. It was the first time in her life that she had had to undertake such business, but she set herself to it with all her courage, often having no money in hand to pay for what she had ordered, always trusting in God, and never finding His providence fail her. Such is constantly the trial which God exacts of those into whose hands He puts the executions of His own great designs.

Many stories were afterwards in circulation of the wonderful things which happened during the progress of this building, which was not completed for nearly a year. One day Teresa had nothing wherewith to pay for some work she wished to order, and St. Joseph appeared to her, bidding her undertake the matter without fear. While the work was going on, some money was sent to her from a person from whom she had expected nothing. Another time she was hesitating about the purchase of a little tenement adjoining her house, without which, as it seemed to her, she could not have a church for the convent. Our Lord reproved her, saying He had told her to go into the house just as she could; that men were always avaricious, fearing that the earth itself would fail them, while He had so often slept in the open air

for want of a home to shelter Him. Teresa took the reproof, examined with fresh care the plan of the house she had already purchased, and found that it was enough to leave room for a church, though it would be a small one. So she gave up the wish to enlarge her property.

Soon after the beginning of the undertaking for the building of the new house, on the feast of St. Clare, August 12, Teresa was about to communicate, when that Saint appeared to her in great splendour and beauty, bidding her go on with her enterprise, and promising that she herself would assist her therein. This promise was fulfilled by the abundant alms and other assistance which the new community, in the time of its first struggles, received from the Convent of the Clarisses at Avila, known by the name of Sta. Maria de Jesus. A few days after this, on the feast of the Assumption of our Blessed Lady, Teresa was in the church of the Dominican Monastery, humbly thinking over the sins of her past life, when she was suddenly rapt out of herself, and found herself clothed with a robe of surpassing whiteness and light. After a moment, she observed that the Blessed Virgin was on her right hand and St. Joseph on her left, and they were clothing her with this robe of heavenly splendour. They assured her she was cleansed from her sins. Our Lady stretched out her hands to her with the tenderness of a loving mother, and told her that she gave her great pleasure by her devotion to the glorious St. Joseph, that the convent should be founded, and that our Lord, as well as herself and

her blessed Spouse, should be faithfully served there ; that she was not to fear that the first fervour would be relaxed, though she was to put herself under an obedience which was not to her taste ; that she and St. Joseph would protect them ; that our Lord would live in the midst of them as He had promised, and that in proof of this she gave her a jewel. As she uttered these words, the Blessed Virgin placed on her neck a collar of gold, more beautiful than could ever be seen on earth, with a cross of inestimable value hanging therefrom. Then our Lady and St. Joseph ascended to Heaven, accompanied by a multitude of angels, leaving Teresa overwhelmed with consolation and joy.<sup>3</sup>

The words of our Blessed Lady about the obedience which was not to the taste of Teresa, referred to the question which was then passing in her mind as to the proposed submission of the new convent to the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Avila instead of that of the Provincial of the Order. Our Lord had urged Teresa to take this step. It has already been narrated that Father Angelo de Salazar had withdrawn the consent which he had at first given to the foundation of the new convent. It seems to have been providentially ordered that this withdrawal of his should for a time put an end to the designs of Teresa and her friends, in order that the convent might ultimately be founded as it was under the jurisdiction of the Bishop. Had it been originally placed under the Provincial, it might easily have been destroyed during the storm with which the Reform, of which it was the

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, c. xxxiii. 16.

beginning, was assailed. The Provincial would always have been exposed to the remonstrances of his own religious, and besides, his office was only short-lived, and he might have been succeeded by an enemy to the new foundation. As the Brief under which the foundation was finally made was applied for by Doña Guiomar de Ulloa at the instigation of Fra Ybañez, it seems probable that that Father had seen from the beginning the advantages of placing the convent under the Bishop, for its submission to the Bishop was a part of the Brief itself as it was originally obtained. It is easy to understand how St. Teresa would shrink from this separation from her ordinary Superiors. But our Lord had frequently urged this step upon her, and the event showed that it was necessary for the beginnings of the Reform, if it was to be left in peace.

We must find room for two more anecdotes of this time. While the new convent was in process of building, it is said that one day Juana de Ahumada took St. Teresa with her to a church in the town—that of the Dominicans—to hear a sermon. The preacher was one of those good people who had imbibed strong prejudices against St. Teresa, on account of the proposed foundation. Whether he saw her in the church or not, he preached a philippic against her, pointing his words so plainly that there could be no mistake as to his meaning. Teresa listened, smiling, and rejoicing in her heart at these reproaches as if they had been the highest praises. But her sister could not bear the scene, and persuaded her to leave the church. Another time she was

favoured by God with a very singular grace. Up to this time we have met with nothing in her life in the way of miraculous power exerted for the benefit of others. Juana's little boy, Gonsalvo, was found one day by his father, who had gone out of the house to inspect the workmen, stretched on the floor at his door senseless, and with his little limbs stiff and cold. He took him up, and tried to rouse him, but he appeared to be quite lifeless. It seems that some part of a wall which was being demolished had fallen on him. Teresa was at the time with Doña Guiomar, who took the child in her arms from his poor father, and placed him in those of Teresa. "He is dead," she said, "but God is so powerful that He can recall him to life. What a sad misery for his parents, to have come hither to attend to our business only to lose their only son!" Juana de Ahumada was at the time close on her second confinement, but she was happily out of the room to which the poor boy was brought. Teresa sat with the child in her lap, and when Juana came in, with a secret presentiment of danger, she made a sign to her to be quiet, and lowered her veil over the boy, placing her own face close to his. She remained thus for some little time, interiorly praying God with intense earnestness to spare the poor mother so great an affliction, while she and her husband were devoting themselves to His cause. After a few moments, the child seemed to wake up from a slumber, and stretched his arms to his aunt's face to embrace her. Then Teresa turned quietly to her sister, and asked her what was the trouble she was in? Here was her child. She

bade her embrace him. The boy seemed at first to have some weakness in his limbs, but was soon running about the room and casting himself from time to time into Teresa's arms, as if to thank her for his cure.

A month after this miracle Juana gave birth to another son. He was called Joseph, on account of his aunt's devotion to that great Saint. He lived only three weeks. Teresa used to carry him in her arms and say to him that she prayed God, if he were to live to offend Him, rather to take him to Himself, little angel as he was. When the sickness of which he died attacked him, Teresa took him in her arms and looked fixedly in his face. Juana sat by, watching her sister. Suddenly Teresa's face was inflamed with heavenly light and beauty, and at that moment the little child breathed his last. Teresa was going to leave Juana that she might indulge her grief, but the mother had strength enough to say that she was not to go; she saw that her little Joseph had ceased to live. Teresa replied, her face still glowing with the effects of the vision she had seen, "Ah, what praise is due to God, when we see what a multitude of angels come to receive the soul of one of these little infants who are so like them!"

Another anecdote of this time relates how a wall, which had been solidly built from the foundations, and was intended to form a main part of the new convent, fell in a single night entirely to the ground. It was thought that the work must have been badly done, but Teresa saw in the accident rather a sign of the malice of the devil, determined, if possible, to

hinder the undertaking. She said that her brother was to pay the workmen, notwithstanding, and that the wall had been thrown down by a multitude of devils. Doña Guiomar was frightened because she thought this was a sign that the convent would never prosper. St. Teresa, with great peace and calm, simply replied that if the wall had fallen they would build it up again. Another time Doña Guiomar had written to her mother, living at Ciudad de Toro, to beg her to lend a sum of money which was necessary for the carrying on of the work. She was much afraid that her mother would refuse her request. But Teresa told her the money had been already paid, and was in the hands of the person who had been sent from Avila with the message. She even mentioned the room in the house at Toro in which the gift had been made.



## CHAPTER IX.

### *Six months at Toledo.*

AS the year wore on and the building advanced, the danger of some interference, or of the detection of the intention for which the house was designed, increased. Just at this time Providence came to the aid of St. Teresa in an unexpected way, by removing her for several months from the scene of action. It has already been said that the rules of the Convent of the Incarnation permitted frequent and long absences on the part of the religious, and that Teresa, on account of her great reputation, was much in request as a visitor among people who could not well be refused. Just at this moment, then, a person of great consideration in the kingdom of Castile, Don Arias de Pardo, Lord of Malagon and several other places, chanced to die. His wife, Doña Luisa de la Cerda, was so overwhelmed by her loss as to be inconsolable in her grief. People thought that it would cost her her life. She had heard of Teresa, and she knew that in her convent the rule did not forbid such visits as those we have spoken of. She wrote at once to the Provincial of the Carmelites, Father Angelo de Salazar, to beg that Teresa might be sent to Toledo to spend some time with her. The Provincial could

not refuse a lady of so high position under such circumstances, and on the eve of Christmas the letter arrived at Avila ordering Teresa to set out for the house of Doña Luisa.

Teresa felt an immense repugnance to this visit. She commended the matter to our Lord during Matins, and she fell into an ecstasy, in the course of which our Lord told her to go without hesitation, and not to listen to any advice to the contrary; that she would have to suffer in the journey, but her suffering would turn to His glory. It was convenient for the affair of her new convent that she should be absent until the Brief arrived, for the Provincial was to be at Avila soon, and the devil was preparing a great plot against his arrival. He Himself, however, would take her part. It turned out as our Lord intimated. Many persons urged Teresa to write to the Provincial to remonstrate before setting out, but she would not listen to them. She went straight to the Rector of the Society in Avila, Father Gaspar de Salazar, and laid the whole matter before him. He told her to go without delay. So she asked Juan de Ovalle, her brother-in-law, to escort her, and he went with her to Toledo.

Shortly before this, as it seems, Teresa had received an unexpected help towards the expenses of her new work. This came in the shape of a considerable sum of money, sent from South America by her brother Lorenzo, who seems also to have been in the habit of supplying her with money from time to time which went towards her support in the convent. This remittance gave her great joy, not

only on account of the tender affection which always knit her to even the most distant members of her own family, but also because she could not but attribute it to a special inspiration. The sum was much beyond what she had before received from him. It gave occasion to the earliest extant letter which remains to us from her pen. It will be seen that she tells her brother how she had hitherto managed to meet the expenses, partly from the dowries of two young ladies who were afterwards to join the new community. The letter runs as follows. It was written just before the departure for Toledo from Avila, December 30, 1561.

LETTER I.—*To Don Lorenzo de Cepeda, at Quito.*

JESUS.

May the Holy Spirit be always with you, my dear brother!

I beg our Lord to reward you for the great diligence you have shown in helping us all. I hope that you will gain great merit by it before our Lord. Indeed all those to whom you sent the money were in such dire necessity that the help could not have come at a better moment, and to myself personally it has been a great consolation. God inspired you to send me such a large sum, no doubt; as for a poor little religious like myself who, thanks be to God, considers it an honour now to wear a patched habit, what I had already received through Juan Pedro d'Espinoza and Varona (such is the name of the other merchant I think) was enough to provide for my necessities for many years to come.

I have already written you a long account of an affair which I could not help undertaking for reasons with which God had inspired me. I dare not explain myself more

clearly here. I will only say that certain holy and learned persons think that I am bound to set aside all fear and to do my utmost that this affair may succeed. There is a question, as I told you, of founding a convent where there are to be only thirteen nuns, without possibility of increasing the number; they are to keep a very strict enclosure, to speak to no one except with their veils down; and lastly, they will have to be much given to prayer and mortification. I will enter into greater details in my letter which I shall send you by Antony Moran when he leaves here.

Señora Doña Guiomar, who writes the enclosed letter, is lending me her assistance in this undertaking. She is the widow of Don Francisco D'Avila, who belonged to the house of Sobralejo, and whom you knew. Her husband died nine years ago: he was a very rich man, and independently of the fortune which he left her, she has also some property of her own. Though she was but twenty-five years of age when left a widow, she would not marry again, she preferred to give herself to God, and it may be said that she is already far advanced in spiritual things. We have lived during the last four years almost in more intimate friendship than if we were sisters. She certainly helps me much, seeing that she gives a great part of her income, but at this moment she is without money, and I have to buy a house and turn it into a convent. Through the goodness of our Divine Master I had received the dowry of two girls in advance, and it was with this sum I privately bought the house, but I had not one penny for the repairs that had to be done. Putting my trust in God alone, and never doubting that He would come to my assistance in a work that He had commanded, I began to bargain with the workmen. It was folly to all appearance; and behold, our Divine Master took it into His own hands, and inspired you with the thought of helping me in my greatest need. What surprises me, even more, is that you should have added forty crowns

to the sum, which would otherwise have been wanting. I firmly believe that I owe this assistance to the intercession of St. Joseph, who is to be the patron of this house, and I know that he will reward you for your charity. The house is poor and small, but it has a fine view and space about it. At last it is nearly finished.

They are gone to Rome for the Bulls, for though this convent is of the Carmelite Order, it will be under obedience to the Bishop. The girls who are to enter it are all chosen subjects, models of humility, penance, and prayer. Therefore, I hope it will all turn to the greater glory of God if we succeed, as no doubt we shall. Commend the business to Him, if you please. I count, with his help, on its being finished before the departure of Antony Moran.

He came to see me, and his visit gave me great pleasure. He seems to me to be loyal, straightforward, and intelligent, and he gave me some very consoling particulars about you all. Yes, one of the greatest graces which our Lord has bestowed on me is the having convinced my brothers of the vanity of this world, so that they long to retire from its turmoil. What joy for me to know that they are on the road to Heaven! It is what I cared most to hear, for until now I have been rather uneasy. Glory be given to Him Who is the Author of all good, and may He grant you the grace ever to advance more and more in His service! Since the reward is unbounded we ought not to linger on the road, but must, on the contrary, go on always advancing, taking at least a few steps every day with fervour. Let us show, as is true, that we are always fighting, and that, therefore, there can be no rest for us until the victory is won.

All those whom you employed to send funds over here acquitted themselves faithfully of the commission; but Antony Moran distinguished himself above all. Not only did he find means to sell the gold at a higher price, and

without charge, as you will see, but he took the trouble to come here himself, from Madrid, to bring the money, though he was not in very good health. It was, however, but a passing indisposition, and he is better now. I perceive that he is much attached to you. He brought the money from Varona also, with very great care. I am, alike, much pleased with Antony Rodriguez, who came here. I will give him a letter for you, in case he is the first to start. Moran showed me the one you wrote to him. Pray believe, as I believe myself, that the eagerness with which you came to my help did not proceed from your charity alone, but also from a special inspiration from God.

My sister, Doña Maria,<sup>1</sup> sent me the enclosed letter for you yesterday. She is to send me another when she has received the money. This help has come very opportunely for her. She is a good Christian, left by the death of her husband in great need. Her children will be ruined if Juan de Ovalle takes into his head to proceed against her. His rights are certainly not what he imagines. In truth, the property was sold very disadvantageously, and in some sort was squandered away. But Martin Guzman (to whom God be merciful !) had some right on his side, and judgment was given for him. I think, however, very unfortunately. However, I cannot bear that they should now want to claim back a property that my father (God have him in His glory !) sold. The lawsuit, I repeat, would ruin my sister, Doña Maria. God deliver us from such interested views which cannot be put in practice without doing wrong to one's relations. And yet such is the state of things in these parts that it is hard to find a father at peace with his son, or a brother with his brother. Consequently Juan de Ovalle's proceedings have not surprised me in the least. It surprises me more that he should have suspended them

<sup>1</sup> Doña Maria de Cepeda, sister of the Saint, who had been married to Don Martin Guzman.

out of love for me. He seems to me to be very well disposed, but I would not trust him in this matter, and I should advise, when you send him the thousand crowns, that the sum be only given to him on condition that he pledged himself in writing to hand over half of it to my sister, Maria de Cepeda, on the very day that he recommences proceedings.

The houses which were to be sold are not yet sold, but Martin Guzman had already received three thousand maravedies for them, which should, in justice, be given back to Juan de Ovalle. With that and with the thousand crowns which you are to send him, he will not be so straitened as he is now, and he could live at Avila, where he has done quite right to come. But without this help it would be impossible for him to reside there habitually. At the most he could only come there from time to time, and even then he would be pinched.

God has given Juan de Ovalle a very perfect wife. Doña Juana's<sup>2</sup> goodness, and the esteem in which she is held, is something to praise God for. She is a truly angelic soul. The one who is worth least of all the family is myself, and considering my worthlessness, none of my brothers ought to acknowledge me as their sister. I cannot think how it is that you love me so much. I say this in all sincerity of heart. To return to Doña Juana. She has gone through innumerable trials and has borne them with admirable fortitude. If you can send her the sum which I have just named, my dear brother, without inconvenience to yourself, do not put off doing so, even though it should be little by little. You will see by the letter how your money has been applied. Torribia was dead, so what you destined for her has been given by her husband to her children, and this has been of great benefit to them, for they are very poor. I

<sup>2</sup> Doña Juana de Ahumada was the youngest of the Saint's sisters. Teresa herself had brought her up in the Convent of the Incarnation.

have had said all the Masses which you asked for, and a part were said before the money arrived. They were said for the intention which you named, which edified me much, and I have commissioned the most holy priests whom I could find with them. I despatched all this business in Señora Guiomar's house, where I am quite at home, and all the more so because I am with people who talk to me often about you. If you wish to know how this comes about, it is because a friend of this lady, who is a religious in our house of the Incarnation, has had leave to come out and spend some time in her house. And the Father Provincial has desired me to be her companion. I am much more free here for all that I want to do than if I was at my sister's. We live in great retirement, and talk only of God. I shall stay here as long as the Father Provincial directs, and I shall be very glad if he lets me remain a little while longer, because I have every facility for negotiating the affair about which I spoke to you a little higher up.

Now to speak of my very dear sister, Doña Juana.<sup>3</sup> Though I name her last, she does not, assuredly, hold the last place in my heart, and I very gladly tell you that I pray God for her with as much care as I do for you. I kiss her hand a thousand times for all her kindness to me. I do not know how to acknowledge it except by getting prayers (as I do) for our dear little child. The holy friar, Peter of Alcantara, the Discalced Franciscan of whom I spoke to you in one of my letters, has taken him under his very special protection. The Fathers of the Society of Jesus and other persons whom God will hearken to are also praying for him. May it please His Divine Majesty to make him even better than his father and mother; they are good people, but I ask that he may be better still. Always tell me in your letters, I beg, about the perfect union which

<sup>3</sup> Doña Juana de Fuentes y Guzman, wife of Don Lorenzo de Cepeda.



exists between you and your dear wife, nothing can give me greater pleasure.

I think that I told you I would send by Antony Moran a collated copy of the executory papers. You may be quite sure that I shall not fail to do so. They are drawn up to perfection, from what they say. If this copy does not reach you safely, I will send another, and I shall continue to do so until I hear that you have received it safely. It was through the whim of some one who was opposed to it, and whom I will not name, that it was not sent to you before this. I will also send you, by the same opportunity, some relics in a reliquary of no great value. I cannot sufficiently thank my dear sister for her handsome present. If it had been given me in the days when I wore gold as part of my dress, I should have greatly coveted so richly-framed and beautiful a picture. May our Lord vouchsafe to preserve my dear Doña Juana to us, and give her, as well as you, many and holy years !

I stayed so long conversing with Antony Moran that it was already late before I began this letter. I should say more, but he wants to start to-morrow, and I shall keep the rest for when I write to you through Don Geronimo de Cepeda. So there is no great inconvenience in my ending here. Do not fail, I beg, to read all my letters. The best thing that I have done this time is to have made use of good ink. But I write so hurriedly, and as I have told you, it is so late, that I cannot read over my letter. My health is better than usual. I wish that yours may be perfect, both of soul and body. Amen. If I do not write to Messrs. Fernando and Pedro de Ahumada, it is because time fails me, but I will do so soon. I am happy to tell you that some persons of great piety, who know the particulars of this affair, account it to be a miracle that you should have sent me so large a sum just at the right moment. I hope through the goodness of God that, if by and by I should want any more, He will

put it into your heart to come to my help, even if you do not intend it.

Your very faithful servant,

DONA TERESA DE AHUMADA.

To-day is two days before the first day of the year 1562.

This letter gives us many very interesting glimpses into the state of the family of St. Teresa. Two of her brothers, Fernando and Pedro de Ahumada, were in South America, as well as Lorenzo himself, and they seem to have been in his neighbourhood, as she sends excuses to them for not writing to them at the same time. Lorenzo himself had prospered in the New World. He had become Treasurer General of the province of Quito, and all such offices seem to have been lucrative. A few years before the date of this letter, in March, 1556, he had married the lady who is mentioned by Teresa as Doña Juana. She was Juana Maria de Fuentes y Guzman, and seems to have been in every way worthy of the high praises given her by her sister-in-law. Lorenzo had sent money and presents to his sister, and, as it seems, to other members of the family. He had also sent money for Masses, of which St. Teresa took charge, and the Masses were said for his intention. Doña Maria de Cepeda, the elder sister of St. Teresa, was at that time a widow. We have heard of her and of her husband, Don Martin de Guzman, already. Lorenzo had sent money to her among others, and it was very welcome. We are not told when her husband had died, but he died suddenly, and St. Teresa mentions that she

was in anxiety at the time, because he had not had time to receive the last sacraments of the Church. She tells us in her *Life*,<sup>4</sup> that she was in prayer soon after this, and that it was revealed to her that her sister Doña Maria was to die in the same way. She was also told to go and prepare her for a sudden death. Her confessor would not at first let her act on this vision, but when the warning was repeated, he told her to go, saying it would do no harm. Teresa went, and without telling her sister why she had come, she gently led her to practise frequent confession and keep a vigilant guard over her soul. Maria died as had been predicted, a few years after this, and it was only a few days after her usual confession. Not quite a week after her death, our Lord appeared to St. Teresa after her Communion, and let her see Him receive her sister to eternal glory.

At the time when this letter was written, Maria de Cepeda was, as has been said, a widow and in straitened circumstances. The language of St. Teresa is not quite clear to us, but it seems as if there had been some dispute between Martin de Guzman and Juan de Ovalle, her two brothers-in-law, about some property of her father's which had been sold at a very low price, in order that the proceeds might be divided among his children. It looks as if Juan de Ovalle had threatened to go to law with Don Martin, on the ground that the property had been sold so much beneath its value. St. Teresa says that Juan was right as to the fact, but that he had given up his suit out of regard to her. But she thinks it

<sup>4</sup> *Life*, c. xxxiv. 24.

prudent to propose that the sum of a thousand ducats, which Lorenzo was sending to Juan, should be given him on condition that if he again began his suit against his sister-in-law, half the sum should at once pass to Doña Maria.

The letter also gives us an insight into the household of Doña Guiomar de Ulloa and her relations with St. Teresa. It seems also that a third brother of the Saint, Don Geronimo de Cepeda, was about to follow his brothers' example in seeking his fortune in the New World.

It was soon evident that the journey to Toledo was fraught with great blessings to more than one soul. Teresa had hardly set foot in the house of Doña Luisa, when that good lady began to regain the serenity and peace of soul which she had so completely lost. She conceived a great affection for Teresa, and showed it afterwards in many ways, especially by the foundation of a convent of the Reform at Malagon. The whole household had heard that Teresa was a saint, and at once held her in veneration. It is recorded that they used to watch her through the door when she was at her prayers, and frequently witnessed the ecstasies to which she was accustomed. They began to live more perfectly, to go frequently to the sacraments, to give great alms to the poor. Doña Luisa had living with her a young lady, one of her own relations, Maria de Salazar, who profited more than the others in this household from the presence of the Saint. She began to give herself to prayer and solitude, and made a general confession as a foundation to a complete change of life. She

afterwards became one of the choicest gems of the new Reform of Mount Carmel, and we shall often meet her again.

St. Teresa's own account of this visit is so characteristic that it is well to insert it in her own words. It is clear that she could not at all understand how any good could be expected from her presence, and that, when she was once in the house of Doña Luisa, which was probably more like a palace than an ordinary dwelling, she was entirely free from all shyness and timidity in her intercourse with the lady and her friends.

She was comforted every day more and more. This was very remarkable, because, as I said before, her suffering reduced her to great straits. Our Lord must have done this in answer to the many prayers which the good people of my acquaintance made for me, that I might prosper in my work. She had a profound fear of God, and was so good, that her great devotion supplied my deficiencies. She conceived a great affection for me—I, too, for her, because of her goodness; but all was, as it were, a cross for me, for the comforts of her house were a great torment, and her making so much of me made me afraid. I kept my soul continually recollected—I did not dare to be careless; nor was our Lord careless of me; for while I was there He bestowed the greatest graces on me, and those graces made me so free, and filled me with such contempt for all I saw—and the more I saw the greater my contempt—that I never failed to treat those ladies, whom to serve would have been a great honour for me, with as much freedom as if I had been their equal. I derived very great advantages from this, and I said so. I saw that she was a woman, and as much liable to passion and weakness as I was: that rank is

of little worth, and the higher it is, the greater the anxiety and trouble it brings. People must be careful of the dignity of their state, which will not suffer them to live at ease: they must eat at fixed hours and by rule, for everything must be according to their state, and not according to their constitutions: and they have frequently to take food fitted more for their state than for their liking. So it was that I came to hate the very wish to be a great lady. God deliver me from this wicked artificial life! Though I believe that this lady, notwithstanding that she was one of the chief personages of the realm, was a woman of great simplicity, and that few were more humble than she was. I was very sorry for her, for I saw how often she had to submit to much that was disagreeable to her, because of the requirements of her rank. Then, as to servants, though this lady had very good servants, how slight is that little trust that may be put in them! One must not be conversed with more than another; otherwise, he who is so favoured is envied by the rest. This of itself is a slavery, and one of the lies of the world is that it calls such persons masters, who, in my eyes, are nothing else but slaves in a thousand ways.<sup>5</sup>

These words help us in some measure to form to ourselves a picture of Teresa, for the first time in her life, in the house of a great lady of the world, her bright independent frankness, her wondering dislike for the punctilious ceremoniousness of the life of the Spanish grandees, as well of the irresistible fascination of her own character, discovering, as it were, and drawing to itself the many elements of goodness, devotion, and religiousness which were to be found in the stately formal inmates of such households as

<sup>5</sup> *Life*, c. xxxiv. 4—6.

that of Doña Luisa. She goes on to speak of her intimacy with a great member of the Order of St. Dominic, in which she numbered so many of her most valuable friends and guides. As she seldom mentions any names in her account of herself, there has been some discussion concerning the person of whom she here speaks. It seems either to have been Fra Vicente Baron, who has been already mentioned as her father's confessor, and as having been of much use to her own soul after her father's death, or Fra Garcia de Toledo, brother to the Duke of Alva. The preponderance of external authority seems to favour the latter hypothesis, but it must be remembered that St. Teresa introduces this person in her narrative with the remark that she had conversed with him some years before, and this note seems to belong rather to Fra Vicente than to the other.

Whoever he was, this Dominican was of great service to Teresa, and received from her equally great benefits in return. She says that she was hearing Mass in the church of his monastery, when she felt a great desire to send for him to speak to her. "I felt a longing to know the state of his soul, for I wished him to be a great servant of God." She checked the impulse, as she was recollected in prayer, but at last she overcame her reluctance, and rang for the good friar, who came to speak to her in one of the confessionals. "We began by asking one another of our past lives, for we had not seen one another for many years. I told him that my life had been one in which my soul had had many trials. He insisted much on my telling him what those

trials were. I said that they were not to be told, and I could not tell them. He replied that the Dominican Father, of whom I have spoken (Fra Ybañez), knew them, and that as they were very great friends, he could learn them from him, so that I had better tell them without hesitation."

Thus she told him all that had passed in confession. She says that, contrary to her usual feelings, she had no difficulty in opening herself entirely to him, any more than to Father Gaspar de Salazar. In truth, she had a very high esteem of him, and longed to see him advance in the way of prayer. When he begged her to pray much for him, she says, she could not help it.

So I went back to my place where I was in the habit of praying alone, and began to pray to our Lord, being extremely recollected, in that my simple silly way, when I speak without knowing very often what I am saying. It is love that speaks, and my soul is so beside itself that I do not regard the distance between it and God. That love which I know His Majesty has for it makes it forget itself, and think itself to be one with Him, and so, as being one with Him, and not divided from Him, the soul speaks foolishly. When I had prayed with many tears that the soul of this religious might serve Him truly—for though I considered it good, it was not enough for me, I would have it much better—I remember I said, "O Lord, Thou must not refuse me this grace—behold him, he is a fit person to be our friend."<sup>6</sup>

She goes on in her own beautiful way, breaking out into wonder at the condescension of God, Who

<sup>6</sup> *Life*, c. xxiv. 10.



allows such simple familiarity on the part of those who seek Him in prayer. At that same time she was tried interiorly by some distressing thoughts, whether she was herself in the grace of God, and she implored Him "not to suffer her to fall into sin, with great sweetness, dissolved in tears." She was told she might console herself, and be confident that she was in a state of grace "because a love of God like mine, together with the graces and feelings with which His Majesty filled my soul, was of such a nature as to be inconsistent with a state of sin." She had now confidence that our Lord would hear her prayer as to this good Dominican friar. She was told to say certain things to him as from our Lord, and this was a great trial to her, for she always dreaded that kind of message, and had a great struggle with herself in this case. At last she promised our Lord to execute the commission, wrote down what she was told to say, and gave it to the Father. She did not understand the truths herself, she says, but our Lord had prepared the heart of the Father for them, so that he found them so much to the point that he was in great wonder. She too was astonished at the effect of her communication, because he seemed in a short time to have acquired a great experimental knowledge of things that can only be learnt by experience in the subject of prayer. "Our Lord," she continues, "wrought a complete change in this Father, so much so that he scarcely knew himself, so to speak. He has given him bodily health, so that he may do penance, such as he never had before, for he was sickly. He has given him

courage to undertake good works, with other gifts, so that he seems to have received a most special vocation from our Lord."<sup>7</sup>

If this good Father was Garcia de Toledo, the brother of the famous Duke of Alva, we shall meet him again later on in the life of St. Teresa. She was employed during this sojourn at Toledo on the work which Fra Ybañez had enjoined upon her, and for which we owe him an immense debt of gratitude—the composition of the long Relation which goes by the name of her *Life*. This famous work, as we now possess it, is not exactly identical with that which she wrote for Fra Ybañez, which was not divided into chapters and did not carry on her history so far as the present *Life*. But there can be no doubt that we have in substance the original. The original of the present *Life* is in the handwriting of St. Teresa, and is now one of the great treasures of the Palace of the Escorial. It appears to have been Garcia de Toledo who, some time later, commanded her to write out this second copy, which carries the history on to the time of the foundation of the Convent of St. Joseph, which we have not yet quite reached. When the first Relation was finished it was sent to Fra Ybañez from Toledo, in the June of the year of which we are now speaking. It was accompanied by a long letter, giving an account of herself up to the time at which it was written, which is the second of St. Teresa's Relations, formally so called. It runs as follows :

<sup>7</sup> *Life*, c. xxxiv. 17.

## JESUS.

I think it is more than a year since this was written ; God has all this time protected me with His hand, so that I have not become worse ; on the contrary, I see a great change for the better in all I have to say : may He be praised for it all !

1. The visions and revelations have not ceased, but they are of a much higher kind. Our Lord has taught me a way of prayer, wherein I find myself far more advanced, more detached from the things of this life, more courageous, and more free.<sup>8</sup> I fall into a trance more frequently, for these ecstasies at times come upon me with great violence, and in such a way as to be outwardly visible, I having no power to resist them ; and even when I am with others—for they come in such a way as admits of no disguising them, unless it be by letting people suppose that, as I am subject to disease of the heart, they are fainting-fits ; I take great pains, however, to resist them when they are coming on—sometimes I cannot do it.

2. As to poverty, God seems to have wrought great things in me ; for I would willingly be without even what is necessary, unless given me as an alms ; and therefore my longing is extreme that I may be in such a state as to depend on alms alone for food. It seems to me that to live when I am certain of food and raiment without fail, is not so complete an observance of my vow or of the counsels of Christ as it would be to live where no revenue is possessed, and I should be in want at times ; and as to the blessings that come with true poverty, they seem to me to be great, and I would not miss them. Many times do I find myself with such great faith, that I do not think God will ever fail those who serve Him, and without any doubt that there is, or can be, any time in which His words are not fulfilled : I cannot persuade myself to the contrary, nor

<sup>8</sup> See *Life*, c. xxvii.

can I have any fear ; and so, when they advise me to accept an endowment, I feel it keenly, and betake myself to God.

3. I think I am much more compassionate towards the poor than I used to be, having a great pity for them and a desire to help them ; for if I regarded only my good-will, I should give them even the habit I wear. I am not fastidious with respect to them, even if I had to do with them or touched them with my hands,—and this I now see is a gift of God ; for though I used to give alms for His love, I had no natural compassion. I am conscious of a distinct improvement herein.

4. As to the evil speaking directed against me—which is considerable, and highly injurious to me, and done by many—I find myself herein also very much the better. I think that what they say makes scarcely any more impression upon me than it would upon an idiot. I think at times, and nearly always, that it is just. I feel it so little, that I see nothing in it that I might offer to God, as I learn by experience that my soul gains greatly thereby ; on the contrary, the evil speaking seems to be a favour. And thus, the first time I go to prayer, I have no ill-feeling against them ; the first time I hear it, it creates in me a little resistance, but it neither disturbs nor moves me ; on the contrary, when I see others occasionally disturbed, I am sorry for them. So it is I put myself out of the question ; for all the wrongs of this life seem to me so light, that it is not possible to feel them, because I imagine myself to be dreaming, and see that all this will be nothing when I am awake.

5. God is giving me more earnest desires, a greater love of solitude, a much greater detachment, as I said, with the visions ; by these He has made me know what all that is, even if I gave up all the friends I have, both men and women and kindred. This is the least part of it : my kindred are rather a very great weariness to me ; I leave

them in all freedom and joy, provided it be to render the least service unto God ; and thus on every side I find peace.

6. Certain things, about which I have been warned in prayer, have been perfectly verified. Thus, considering the graces received from God, I find myself very much better ; but, considering my service to Him in return, I am exceedingly worthless, for I have received greater consolation than I have given, though sometimes that gives me grievous pain. My penance is very scanty, the respect shown me great, much against my will very often.<sup>9</sup> However, in a word, I see that I live in an easy, not a penitential life ; God help me, as He can !

7. It is now nine months, more or less, since I wrote this with mine own hand ; since then I have not turned my back on the graces which God has given me ; I think I have received, as far as I can see, a much greater liberty of late. Hitherto I thought I had need of others, and I had more reliance on worldly helps. Now I clearly understand that all men are bunches of dried rosemary, and that there is no safety in leaning on them, for if they are pressed by contradictions or evil speaking they break down. And so I know by experience that the only way not to fall is to cling to the Cross, and put our trust in Him Who was nailed thereto. I find Him a real Friend, and with Him I find myself endowed with such might that, God never failing me, I think I should be able to withstand the whole world if it were against me.

8. Having a clear knowledge of this truth, I, who used to be very fond of being loved by others, now do not care for that, yea, rather, their love seems to weary me in some measure, excepting theirs to whom I think I do good. Of the former I wish to be loved, in order that they may bear with me ; and of the latter, that they may be more inclined to believe me when I tell them that all is vanity.

<sup>9</sup> *Life*, c. xxxi. § 15.

9. In the very grievous trials, persecutions, and contradictions of these months,<sup>10</sup> God gave me great courage; and the more grievous they were, the greater the courage, without weariness in suffering. Not only had I no ill-feeling against those who spoke evil of me, but I had, I believe, conceived a deeper affection for them. I know not how it was; certainly it was a gift from the hand of our Lord.

10. When I desire anything, I am accustomed naturally to desire it with some vehemence; now my desires are so calm, that I do not even feel that I am pleased when I see them fulfilled. Sorrow and joy, excepting in that which relates to prayer, are so moderated, that I seem to be without sense, and in that state I remain for some days.

11. The vehement longings to do penance which come, and have come upon me, are great; and if I do any penance, I feel it to be so slight in comparison with that longing, that I regard it sometimes, and almost always, as a special consolation; however, I do but little, because of my great weakness.

12. It is a very great pain to me very often, and at this moment most grievous, that I must take food, particularly if I am in prayer. It must be very great, for it makes me weep much, and speak the language of affliction, almost without being aware of it, and that is what I am not in the habit of doing, for I do not remember that I ever did so in the very heaviest trials of my life: I am not a woman in these things, for I have a hard heart.

13. I feel in myself a very earnest desire, more so than usual, that God may find those who will serve Him, particularly learned men, in all detachment, and who will not cleave to anything of this world, for I see it is all a mockery; for when I see the great needs of the Church, I look upon it as a mockery to be distressed about aught else. I do

<sup>10</sup> The Saint is supposed to refer to the troubles she endured during the foundation of the Monastery of St. Joseph.

nothing but pray to God for such men, because I see that one person, who is wholly perfect in the true fervour of the love of God, will do more good than many who are lukewarm.

14. In matters concerning the faith, my courage seems to me much greater. I think I could go forth alone by myself against all the Lutherans, and convince them of their errors. I feel very keenly the loss of so many souls. I see many persons making great progress; I see clearly it was the pleasure of God that such progress should have been helped by me; and I perceive that my soul, of His goodness, grows more and more in His love.

15. I think I could not be led away by vainglory, even if I seriously tried, and I do not see how I could imagine any one of my virtues to be mine, for it is not long since I was for many years without any at all; and now, so far as I am concerned, I do nothing but receive graces, without rendering any service in return, being the most worthless creature in the world. And so it is that I consider at times how all, except myself, make progress; I am good for nothing in myself. This is not humility only, but the simple truth; and the knowledge of my being so worthless makes me sometimes think with fear that I must be under some delusion. Thus I see clearly that all my gain has come through the revelations and the raptures, in which I am nothing myself, and do no more to effect them than the canvas does for the picture painted on it. This makes me feel secure and be at rest; and I place myself in the hands of God, and trust my desires; for I know for certain that my desires are to die for Him, and to lose all ease, and that whatever may happen.

16. There are days wherein I remember times without number the words of St. Paul<sup>11</sup>—though certainly they are

<sup>11</sup> Galat. ii. 20: "Vivo autem, jam non ego: vivit vero in me Christus."

not true of me—that I have neither life, nor speech, nor will of my own, but that there is One in me by Whom I am directed and made strong: and I am, as it were, beside myself, and thus life is a very grievous burden to me. And the greatest oblation I make to God, as the highest service on my part, is that I, when I feel it so painfully to be absent from Him, am willing to live on for the love of Him. I would have my life also full of great tribulations and persecutions; now that I am unprofitable, I should like to suffer; and I would endure all the tribulations in the world to gain ever so little more merit—I mean, by a more perfect doing of His will.

17. Everything that I have learnt in prayer, though it may be two years previously, I have seen fulfilled. What I see and understand of the grandeurs of God, and of the way He has shown them, is so high, that I scarcely ever begin to think of them but my understanding fails me—for I am as one that sees things far higher than I can understand—and I become recollected.

18 God so keeps me from offending Him, that I am verily amazed at times. I think I can discern the great care He takes of me, without my taking scarcely any care at all, being as I was, before these things happened to me, a sea of wickedness and sins, and without a thought that I was mistress enough of myself to leave them undone. And the reason why I would have this known is that the great power of God might be made manifest. Unto Him be praise for ever and ever! Amen.

JESUS.

This Relation here set forth, not in my handwriting, is one that I gave to my confessor, and which he with his own hand copied, without adding or diminishing a word. He was a most spiritual man and a theologian: I discussed the state of my soul with him, and he with other learned



men, among whom was Father Mancio.<sup>12</sup> They found nothing in it that is not in perfect agreement with the holy writings. This makes me calm now, though, while God is leading me by this way, I feel that it is necessary for me to put no trust whatever in myself. And so I have always done, though it is painful enough. You, my Father, will be careful that all this goes under the seal of confession, according to my request.<sup>13</sup>

While she was at Toledo on this long visit, Teresa made the acquaintance of another servant of God, who had been guided to the undertaking of an enterprise for His glory, almost exactly identical with her own. This was a famous nun, Maria de Jesus. She was a lady of Granada, who had been left a widow shortly after marriage; and had then become a novice in the Carmelite Convent at her native place. During her novitiate, she had inspirations very similar to those of St. Teresa, about the foundation of a convent of the Primitive Observance. It is curious to find that Father Gaspar de Salazar, of the Society of Jesus, who befriended St. Teresa so powerfully, was the person who approved of her design, when it had been made light of by her usual confessors. She is said to have received the inspiration to found a convent of Discalced Carmelites the same year and the same month with Teresa herself. Encouraged by Father Gaspar, she had obeyed the injunction so faithfully, that, as yet uncloistered, she had made the journey

<sup>12</sup> A celebrated Dominican, Professor of Theology in Salamanca (Bouix).

<sup>13</sup> *The Life of St. Teresa of Jesus*, written by herself. Translated by David Lewis, pp. 386—391.

to Rome barefoot in the company of two Franciscanesses in order to obtain the necessary permission. The Pope, looking at her bleeding feet, said to her: "Woman of strong courage, be it to thee as thou wilt!" She then returned. She had heard of Teresa and probably also of her design, and thus, when Teresa was at Toledo, she came from a considerable distance to confer with her. They were together for a fortnight, and during that time they agreed on the rule of life which should be pursued in their convents. Instead of feeling any rivalry, they derived nothing from their interviews but the greatest mutual consolation. Maria de Jesus founded her convent at Alcala de Henares in a house given her by Doña Leonora de Mascarenhas, who had been *gobernante* to Philip II., and who enabled her to overcome the opposition made by the Carmelite Order. Maria lived there many years, until she died in the odour of sanctity. The convent was subject to the Archbishop of Toledo and followed the Constitutions of St. Teresa. It was the only convent founded by Maria de Jesus. We shall hear by and by of the visit paid to it by St. Teresa when she began the work of her own foundations.

The visit of Maria de Jesus explains the passage about poverty in the Relation lately inserted. Teresa now learnt from her what she did not know before, that according to the Primitive Rule the Carmelite convents were to be without foundations in the way of revenues. She had not hitherto considered this point. She had seen, she tells us, the evils of convents which were too poor to support their inmates,

the anxieties and distractions which the daily needs of the community occasioned, not only to Superiors, but to the nuns themselves, and the shifts to which they were obliged to resort in order to escape destitution. She had determined with her companions and counsellors that the number of the inmates in her convent was not to exceed thirteen—a rule which was afterwards somewhat modified. But even this small number might frequently be in great need, and she had thought it better that the absolute necessities of life should be provided for by endowment. All the time she had a great love herself for the evangelical virtue and practice of poverty, and would very gladly have begged her bread.

“As for myself,” she says, “I never doubted that this was the better part; for I have now for some time wished that it were possible in my state to go about begging, for the love of God—to have no house of my own, nor anything else. But I was afraid that others, if our Lord did not give them the same desire, might live in discontent. Moreover, I feared that it might be the cause of some distraction; for I knew some poor monasteries not very recollected, and I did not consider that their not being recollected was the cause of their poverty, and that their poverty was not the cause of their distraction. Distraction never makes people richer, and God never fails those who serve Him. In short, I was weak in faith; but not so this servant of God.”<sup>14</sup>

As was her wont she made this matter the subject of many consultations with her usual advisers, but

<sup>14</sup> *Life*, c. xxxv. 3.

she got little encouragement from any. Her confessor and the learned men, that is, it seems, the Dominicans, Fra Ybañez and Fra Garcia de Toledo, or Fra Vicente Baron, were against her and gave her abundance of reasons for their opinion. "But," she says, "when I saw what the Rule required, and that poverty was the more perfect way, I could not persuade myself to allow an endowment, and though they did persuade me, now and then, that they were right, yet when I returned to my prayer and saw Christ on the Cross, so poor and destitute, I could not bear to be rich, and I implored Him with tears so to order matters that I might be poor as He was," she says she wrote to Fra Ybañez, "and he sent me back two sheets full of objections and theology against my plan, telling me that he thought much on the subject. I answered, that in order to escape from my vocation, the vow of poverty I had made, and the perfect observance of the counsels of Christ, I did not want any theology to help me, and in this case I should not thank him for his learning." Curiously enough, Doña Luisa de la Cerda, the rich lady with whom she was staying, took the side of poverty against the theologians and the confessors. "Some at first told me they agreed with me, afterwards when they had considered the matter longer, they found in it so many inconveniences that they insisted on my giving it up. I told them that though they changed their opinion so quickly, I would abide by the first."<sup>15</sup>

Among her other counsellors was a good priest,

<sup>15</sup> *Life*, c. xxxv.

Gonzalo de Aranda, and it seems that he had shown her letter to St. Peter of Alcantara, who was then at Avila. This produced from the Saint the following most characteristic letter, written to fortify her resolution and scolding her gently for allowing such a point to be made a matter of discussion.

The letter of St. Peter runs as follows :

May the Holy Spirit fill your soul !

I have seen the letter which Don Gonzalo de Aranda delivered to me. I am not a little astonished at it, and that your ladyship should have trusted such a matter to men of letters, who have nothing to do with it. For, when there is question of lawsuits or of cases of conscience, it is very well to ask counsel of lawyers and theologians, and to follow their advice. But there are most excellent reasons, in matters of perfection, for consulting none but those who themselves make profession of that perfection. That they study and practise this perfection shows sufficiently that no other can have a better judgment or opinion on such points than these. As to the Evangelical Counsels, we have no need of consulting others, except to deliberate whether they are to be embraced, or whether they can be observed, and this last has a very certain look of infidelity about it. For the counsel of God must be good, and cannot be difficult to observe, except to those who have no faith or little confidence in God, being led only by the rules of human prudence. He Who has given the counsel will also give the means, for He is powerful in everything. Even man, who is by nature evil, cannot give any good advice without wishing it to appear such in effect. How much more must He, Who is Goodness itself, be desirous and able to make His counsels good and profitable to those who follow them ! If you wish to follow the counsel of Christ as to greater

perfection, follow it—for it is not given to men more than to women, and our Lord will cause it to succeed happily, as He has done with many others who have followed it. But if you wish to stick to the advice of men of letters without spirit, then rather look out how to have good revenues—so as to see by experience, whether these are better for you than the want of everything in obedience to our Lord's invitation.

When we see some defects in convents of women, let us suppose that these defects came rather from their bearing poverty unwillingly, than from the counsel of God. I myself do not praise poverty simply as such, but that which we bear patiently for the love of the Crucified Lord, and much more than that which we take up of our own accord for His love. If I were to think or believe otherwise, with true and fixed conviction, I should not think myself firm in my faith. No!—in all these things I trust to Christ, and I firmly believe His counsels to be most perfect, because they are Divine; and, though they do not bind under sin, yet still one may be bound by them to be more perfect in imitation of Him, so as not to be able to relinquish them without fault. I say, they oblige, in that they invite to perfection; and thus they render a man more holy and more pleasing to God. Thus I consider that the poor in spirit are blessed, as our Lord Himself says—that is, those who are voluntarily poor, as I myself have experienced—though I trust more to God than to my own experience.

May our Lord grant your ladyship so much light, as to be able to see this truth and carry it to perfection. Do not believe those who assert the contrary, whether from want of light, or from want of faith, or because they have never tasted how sweet God is to those who serve Him, love Him, and for His love renounce all things of this world which are not necessary. Such men are enemies of the Cross of

Christ, and do not believe in the glory which it will hereafter win. May He also give you so much more light even than this, that you may not waver as to a truth so evident, nor take advice from any except those who have seriously embraced the Evangelical Counsels. For, though others who keep the commandments to which they are obliged, be saved, yet commonly they have no greater light than concerning their ordinary actions, and, however good their advice may be, yet the counsel of Christ our Lord will be better, for He adds to the gift of counsel the force to accomplish it, and in the end gives the due rewards to those who fix their trust fully on Him, and not on things of the earth.

FRA PETER OF ALCANTARA.

Avila, April 14, 1562.

The date of this letter shows that it was written in the spring of this year 1562, that is, about the same time as the visit of Maria de Jesus to Teresa at Toledo. In the early summer St. Peter came himself to Toledo, and made the acquaintance of Doña Luisa, at whose house Teresa was still staying. Teresa was delighted. He spoke strongly in favour of the adoption of absolute poverty, and bade her on no account give up her purpose. Her resolution was confirmed by a trance, in which our Lord spoke in the same sense. She was by no means to give up her purpose of founding in poverty. It was His will and the will of His Father. Our Lord promised to help her. Another time He told her that endowments caused confusion, and assured her that whosoever served Him would never be in want of the necessaries of life. At the same time, as she says, our Lord changed the dispositions of the friar at Toledo, Garcia de Toledo, if it was he, who was now

helping her, and he wrote that she was to found her convent in poverty.

St. Teresa remained at Toledo with Doña Luisa for six months. In this interval of time, her sister and brother-in-law returned to Alba, but Juan de Ovalle did not remain there with his wife. He came to Toledo to take leave of Teresa, and passed through Avila on his return homewards. But no sooner had he reached Avila than he fell ill of a fever, and was obliged to take to his bed. A fortnight after this, Teresa herself returned from Toledo. The Provincial had removed his injunction ordering her to remain with Doña Luisa—she was at liberty by his letter to remain or to return. But the time was just at hand for the election of a Prioress for the Convent of the Incarnation, and she had been informed that several of her friends in the convent were thinking of proposing her for that office. This would at any time have been a heavy cross for Teresa, but now it would also be destructive of her long cherished plans with regard to the new foundation, and our Lord bade her depart. She desired crosses, and a heavy cross was in preparation for her. She was not to reject it, but to set out courageously and without delay, and He would help her. She went to her confessor and he told her to go, but delay a few days on account of the great heats. But our Lord urged her not to wait. She was in great trouble and perplexity, because she desired to obey her confessor, and yet she did not feel as if she were executing our Lord's will. This ended by a change in the mind of her confessor, who now bade her go at once.



She parted with great sorrow from Doña Luisa and her family, and was soon once more at her convent in Avila.

My soul was in great straits [she says], and our Lord had taken from me all sweetness in prayer. In short, I was in such a state of torment that I begged the lady to let me go ; for my confessor, when he saw the plight I was in, had already told me to go, God having moved him, as He had moved me. The lady felt my departure very much, and that was another pain to bear ; for it had cost her much trouble, and diverse importunities with the Provincial, to have me in her house. I considered it a very great thing for her to have given her consent, when she felt it so much ; but as she was a person who feared God exceedingly, and, as I told her, among other reasons, that my going away tended greatly to His service, and held out the hope that I might possibly return, she gave way, but with much sorrow. I was not sorry myself at coming away, for I knew that it was an act of greater perfection, and for the service of God. So the pleasure I had in pleasing God took away the pain of quitting that lady—whom I saw suffering so keenly—and others to whom I owed much, particularly my confessor of the Society of Jesus, in whom I found all I needed. But the greater the consolations I lost for our Lord's sake, the greater was my joy in losing them. I could not understand it, for I had a clear consciousness of these two contrary feelings—pleasure, consolation, and joy, in that which weighed down my soul with sadness. I was joyful and tranquil, and had opportunities of spending many hours in prayer ; and I saw that I was going to throw myself into a fire ; for our Lord had already told me that I was going to carry a heavy cross, though I never thought it would be so heavy as I afterwards found it to be—and yet I went forth rejoicing.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Life*, c. xxxv.

We have already said that St. Teresa was occupied during her stay at Toledo in composing the first draft of the long account of herself which we know by the name of her *Life*. It was finished in the June of this year, and was sent to Fra Ybañez with the following letter :

LETTER II.—*To Father Ybañez of the Order of St. Dominic.*

JESUS.

May the Holy Spirit always be with you, my Reverend Father !

It would not be amiss, I think, to set forth in very strong light, the service I have rendered you in writing this book of my life, in order to oblige you to recommend me to our Lord with redoubled zeal. I think I should have a good right to do this, after all I have had to suffer in seeing myself depicted in these pages, and in recalling to my memory my innumerable miseries. Nevertheless I will honestly confess, I have felt more pain in writing the graces with which our Lord has laden me, than the offences which I have committed against His Divine Majesty.

I have made this account full, as you ordered me ; but I count on the promise you have made me, to tear up what you do not think good. I have not finished reading it over, when your messenger is come to ask for it. Thus you may well find places in which I have not explained myself well, and others also in which I have repeated myself. I have so little time for this work, that I have not been able to revise, as I went on, what I was writing.

I beseech you, my Father, to correct it and get it transcribed, before sending it to Father Master John of Avila, for fear my handwriting should be recognized. I desire earnestly that a man of so high a merit should see it, for it

was with that intention that I began it. If he finds that I am in a good way, I shall remain extremely consoled.

My task is now finished, as far as depends on me. As for you, my Father, do with everything just as you think fit. And consider that you are obliged to assist her who thus confides to you the most intimate thoughts of her soul. As long as I live I shall commend your soul to God our Lord. Hasten on, then, in His service, that you may be able also on your part to help me. You will see in what is here written, that we gain by giving ourselves altogether, as you have begun to do, to Him Who gives Himself to us without measure. May He be blessed for ever! I hope in His mercy that we shall see one another some day in Heaven, where we shall know better than in this exile the graces which He has given to us, and where we shall bless Him eternally. Amen. This book was finished in the month of June, 1562.

Your unworthy servant,

TERESA OF JESUS.

It must be remembered that this is the first relation of her life written by St. Teresa. She afterwards, as has been said, rewrote it at the order of Fra Garcia de Toledo, dividing it into chapters, and adding events, such as the foundation of the Convent of St. Joseph, which had not occurred when the first copy was made.

## CHAPTER X.

### *Foundation of St. Joseph's Convent.*

ST. TERESA, as has been said, left Toledo in the June or July of 1562, and, on arriving at Avila, she found everything prepared for immediate action in the matter of the opening of her Convent of St. Joseph. The Brief for the foundation arrived in Avila the same evening with Teresa herself. It was addressed to Doña Guiomar de Ulloa and her mother, Doña Aldonza de Guzman, for it was important that Teresa's own name should not appear in it, as she was still under the jurisdiction of the Carmelite Superiors of the Incarnation. The Bishop of Avila was in or near the city, and it was all important to gain his consent to the projected foundation, which was to be under his authority. The Bishop, Don Alvaro de Mendoza, was of a noble family of the Counts of Ribadavia, and was illustrious for his virtues as well as for his lineage. He was throughout a great friend of St. Teresa, and, as we shall see, she owed much to him at this conjuncture. St. Peter of Alcantara was now at Avila, staying with Don Francisco de Salcedo. Teresa could also reckon on the good offices of Master Gaspar, and of Gonzalez de Aranda, the priest mentioned in the letter from St. Peter printed in the

last chapter. Father Gaspar de Salazar was still Rector of the house of the Society of Jesus in the city, and he was now Teresa's chief guide, though Father Balthasar Alvarez heard her in confession. Doña Guiomar was absent, apparently on purpose, that, if the Brief addressed to her became generally known, people might not suspect too soon that it was to be at once executed. As has been said, Juan de Ovalle was lying ill of fever at the house which had been bought for the new convent, and St. Teresa was thus enabled to superintend in person the final arrangements for the conversion of the house into a convent. It is said that it was St. Peter himself who urged her to obtain permission again to leave her Convent of the Incarnation for this purpose.

The Brief gave full leave to the two ladies already mentioned to erect, according to their petition, one Convent of the Primitive Rule of Mount Carmel, under the obedience of the Bishop for the time being, and it appointed three ecclesiastics, the Prior of the Monastery of Magecala, the Grand Chaplain of the Chapter of Toledo, and the Archdeacon of Segovia, to execute its provisions. We do not hear much of the action of these dignitaries in the course of the history. Perhaps their names were put in as a matter of form. St. Teresa, notwithstanding the permission to found without the leave of any one but the Bishop, thought it better once more to offer the new convent to the Provincial of the Order, who was at this time at Avila, as it seems, to preside at the election of a Prioress for the House of the Incarnation. But Father Angelo still refused his consent. After this,

there was nothing to be done but to apply to the Bishop. It appears that Don Alvaro had been frightened at the idea of a new convent, especially a new convent without any endowment. It was now that the presence of St. Peter of Alcantara became of prime importance for the success of the undertaking. He was within a few weeks of his death,—a broken old man, not long returned from Rome, whither he had been on the affairs of his Reform, and already enjoying the veneration and authority which were due to his lofty sanctity and wonderful victories over the world and human nature. Such a man, if any one, would be listened to. He was unable, as it seems, to leave the house in which he was staying, at all events when the following letter was written by him to the Bishop, and it is to this happy accident that we owe its preservation. The letter runs as follows. It exists in the Life of St. Teresa by Ribera, who says that he had seen it, and that it was all written on less than half a sheet of paper, and that there was no room on the paper for a word more.

LETTER III.—*To the Most Illustrious and Reverend Lord Bishop of Avila, whom may our Lord make a saint !*

May the Spirit of Christ fill the soul of your Lordship !

I receive in spirit your holy blessing. My illness has become so much worse, that it has prevented me from handling an affair which is of very great importance for the service of our Lord. As thinking it so to be, and being desirous to omit nothing which may decide its success, I have desired to make your lordship acquainted with it in a few words. The matter is this: a very spiritual

person, animated by a true zeal, has for some time formed the design of founding at Avila a convent of religious women of the Primitive Rule of the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, which shall be truly exemplary for observance and perfection. With this object, and in order the better to assure in this convent the end and remedy of the observance of the aforesaid primitive rule, it has seemed best that their obedience should be rendered to the Ordinary of this city. Relying on the fact that God has given them one of your holiness and piety for their Bishop, they have gone so far in the matter as to spend more than five thousand reals on the undertaking, and they have also obtained a diploma from Rome for the purpose. The thing is one which extremely pleases me, and for this reason I beseech your lordship again and again, by the love of Christ, to take it up and protect it, for I am sure that it will turn out to the advancement of the worship of God and the good of the city.

If your lordship approves of it—since I am unable to come in person to ask your lordship's blessing and to speak of this matter—I shall be abundantly satisfied if your lordship would send to me any one else whom you may think fit, with whom I may speak of it. As far as I can conjecture, Master Daza is a person to whom the business might safely be committed and entrusted, and if it should be so, it will give me very great consolation and joy. • Your lordship, therefore, may confer on this matter with Master Daza, Gonsalvo de Aranda, and Francisco de Salcedo, all of whom are well known to you, and who can give you more information than I can, though I am abundantly satisfied and pleased with the first virgins who wish to give themselves to this new reformation. The virtue of all of them is well known to me, while I am convinced that the Spirit of our Lord dwells in her who is their chief and leader—which Spirit may His Divine Majesty give and

preserve to your lordship, for His own greater glory and for the universal good of His Church. Amen, amen!

• Your lordship's most unworthy servant and bedesman,

FRA PETER OF ALCANTARA.

It seems that this letter did not at once convince the good Bishop of the prudence of the enterprise, and that St. Peter had to use the fascination and authority of a personal interview, in order to procure the consent of the future Superior of the convent. It was the last great work of the Saint, hastening to his reward. The author of his Life tells us how the messengers of St. Peter, after long discussion with the Bishop, were sent away sad and dejected, and how the Saint told them that the repulse they had met with was to turn out to the greater promotion of the matter. The Bishop was outside the town at some distance, at a place called Tiemblo, and as St. Peter could no longer walk as he had done all his life in his many journeys, he consented to put himself on a mule and to see the Bishop himself. He argued the case fully out, but it may well be imagined that his own presence and the influence of his winning sanctity were the most efficacious of his reasons. The great advantage which ensued from this victory of St. Peter was this—that he had said nothing in his letter about a difficulty which would have induced the Bishop almost to retract his consent if it had once been given under other circumstances, the difficulty about the absence of endowment or revenues. But in the interview, at Tiemblo, he explained this matter also, and he left the Bishop



firmly convinced that the work was the work of God, full of admiration for the sanctity of Teresa, and with a fixed resolution not to waver in his support of the new foundation.

The first inmates of the new convent had long and carefully been prepared by Teresa,—their selection was a matter of indefinitely greater importance than the building of the house. One of them came from the direction of St. Peter of Alcantara himself, and, with two of her companions, was a native of Avila. Another had been brought up by Doña Guiomar de Ulloa, and must thus have been long known to St. Teresa. A third was the sister of a priest of Avila, of whom there will be abundant mention in the history of St. Teresa's foundations. The other was a penitent of the good Master Daza, of whom mention has already been made. The importance of these first stones of the spiritual edifice of the new Carmel makes it well for us to dwell for a moment upon what is known of them before their entrance into the Convent of St. Joseph.

Antonia of the Holy Ghost was a relation of Teresa. She was the daughter of Philip de Henao and Elvira Diaz, and was born at Avila in 1535. She was thus now twenty-six years of age. She had been a very remarkable child. When she was seven years old, she had had a trance, in which she had found herself surrounded by a wonderful light, heard mysterious sounds, and felt herself overwhelmed by inexplicable delight. She received an intimation from our Lord that He was extinguishing in her all concupiscences, and that from that time her soul was to be pure from

all stain. At the same time she felt herself drawn by a most powerful impulse to consecrate herself to Him in the religious state, of which, however, she had but a very confused idea. The spirit of prayer woke up in her soul, and she soon made great progress in that holy practice, remaining sometimes for long together absorbed in God. She had a younger sister, Anne de Henao, nine years younger than herself, and she devoted herself for some time before she joined St. Teresa, to the education of this precious charge, who afterwards followed her into religion. As has been said, it was St. Peter of Alcantara who sent her to St. Teresa, and recommended her as a fit person for the beginnings of the new foundation.

Ursula de los Santos was also a native of Avila. Her father was Martino de Revilla, her mother Maria Alvarez de Arevalo. They were in a good position in society, and their daughter for a time was inclined to give herself to the many innocent pleasures which rank and fortune placed in her way. But she was under the guidance of Master Gaspar Daza, and he soon made her sensible of the vanity of all earthly goods. She survived her admission to the Reform of Mount Carmel only twelve years, during which she did not leave the Convent of St. Joseph for any other foundation. She was a great example of virtue, especially of patience under the great infirmities which latterly she had to suffer. When she came to die, St. Teresa was not at Avila, but she saw her soul pass to Heaven in great glory, and on comparing the time of her vision with that of the death of her spiritual child, she found that the latter had passed

to eternal happiness four hours only after she had breathed her last.

Maria of St. Joseph, as the third of the four first Carmelites of the new convent was called, was Maria de Avila, sister of Julian of Avila, who for a long time was the chaplain of the convent in which his sister was serving our Lord. Mary of the Cross was in the world known as Maria de Paz. She was of poor extraction, and had been brought up out of kindness in the house of Doña Guiomar. She lived forty years in religion, and it was said of her that she was the consolation and providence of all her Sisters, and that she was dearly loved both by God and by all her companions. Like the others, except Ursula de los Santos, she was used by St. Teresa in her subsequent foundations.

We have another anecdote of these last days of St. Peter's intercourse with St. Teresa. It seems that he was consulted by her on the arrangements of the little house, and that he was delighted with them, saying that they reminded him of Bethlehem. One day St. Teresa went to the Cathedral of the city to go to confession to him. He spoke to her of another penitent of his, a young lady, Isabella de Ortega, who had consulted him about her design of leaving the world and her intention of offering herself to the Discalced Franciscan Nuns at Madrid, of whom mention has already been made. But St. Peter, who was just then full of the Reform of St. Teresa, told her that perhaps she was intended for some other place rather than the Franciscan Convent. It was arranged that she should make the acquaintance of Teresa.

Teresa came one morning with her four orphans, who were to be the first religious of the new convent, to the church to hear St. Peter say Mass and to receive Communion at his hands. Isabella de Ortega was there also. She had begged St. Peter to pray for her in his Mass, that she might know the will of God as to her own choice.

When St. Peter came to celebrate his Mass, he was, as was not unfrequent with him, rapt in ecstasy, and he perceived that his holy Father, St. Francis, and St. Antony of Padua were assisting him, the one as deacon and the other as subdeacon. He went on with Holy Mass, and none of the assistants perceived anything extraordinary, till he came to give St. Teresa Communion, and then she alone saw the two Saints one on each side of him. She has not recorded this in her Life, as it seems she has left out many supernatural favours which she received from time to time; but many years after this, when speaking of St. Peter, she related to those who preserved the record of the fact, what she had seen. After his thanksgiving, St. Peter conversed for some time with Teresa and Isabella, and the former explained to her new friend the whole plan of her future convent. It was agreed that Isabella should wait a little, in order to secure the consent of her uncle, under whose care she was, and who might very probably oppose her entrance into a convent so poor and the prospects of which were so precarious. Soon after this, St. Peter took his leave, assuring Teresa of his constant and abiding interest in the undertaking in which he had already helped her so materially.

We must make the Saint herself tell us of the actual beginning of the convent.

When everything was settled [she says] our Lord was pleased that some of us should take the habit on St. Bartholomew's day. The Most Holy Sacrament began to dwell in the house at the same time. With full sanction and authority, then, our monastery of our most glorious Father St. Joseph was founded in the year 1562. I was there myself to give the habit, with two nuns of the house to which we belonged [the Convent of the Incarnation], who happened then to be absent from it. As the house which thus became a monastery was that of my brother-in-law—I said before that he had bought it, for the purpose of concealing our plan—I was there myself with the permission of my Superiors; and I did nothing without the advice of learned men, in order that I might not break, in a single point, my vow of obedience. As these persons considered what I was doing to be most advantageous for the whole Order, on many accounts, they told me—though I was acting secretly, and taking care that my Superiors should know nothing—that I might go on. If they had told me that there was the slightest imperfection in the whole matter, I would have given up the foundation of a thousand monasteries, how much more, then, this one. I am certain of this; for, though I longed to withdraw from everything more and more, and to follow my own Rule and vocation in the greatest perfection and seclusion, yet I wished to do this only conditionally; for if I should have learnt that it would be for the greater honour of our Lord to abandon it, I would have done so, as I did before on one occasion, in all peace and contentment.

I felt as if I were in bliss, when I saw the Most Holy Sacrament reserved, with four poor orphans—for they were received without a dowry—and great servants of God,

established in that house. It was our aim from the beginning to receive only those who by their example might be the foundation on which we could build up what we had in view, great perfection and prayer—and effect a work which I believe to be for the service of our Lord, and the honour of the habit of His glorious Mother. This was my anxiety. It was also a great consolation to me that I had done that which our Lord had so often commanded me to do, and that there was one more church in this city dedicated to my glorious Father St. Joseph. Not that I thought I had done anything myself—for I have never thought so, and do not even think so now; I always looked upon it as the work of our Lord. My part in it was so full of imperfections that I look upon myself rather as a person in fault, than as one to whom any thanks are due. But it was great joy to me, when I saw His Majesty make use of me, who am so worthless, as His instrument in so grand a work. I was therefore in great joy—so much so that I was, as it were, beside myself, lost in prayer.<sup>1</sup>

The two religious of the Convent of the Incarnation were Inez and Anne de Tapia, cousins of St. Teresa. They belonged to the number of her devoted friends in her old convent, and we shall find them, a few years later than this, joining the first little band of religious of St. Joseph's which was sent to form the first foundation which issued from that convent. St. Teresa speaks of them at that time as ready to do anything in the world for her. It must be supposed that they were now on a visit to some relations living near, and so able to be present at the ceremony.

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, c. xxxvi. 4, 5.

Teresa's peace did not last long. Even in the natural course of things, a reaction was likely to set in with one who had so overwrought herself in exertion and prayer for this purpose as St. Teresa; but she had to reckon, not only with nature in herself, but with the enemies of the good work she had accomplished both on earth and in Hell. The first assault came in the way of interior temptation. A few hours only had passed, and she found herself beset by fears and doubts of all sorts. Perhaps, after all, she had been wrong. Perhaps it was a failure in obedience, to do all that she had done without leave from her Provincial. She expected him to be displeased—but, after all, she had offered the convent to him, and she had not left her own community, and why need he trouble about it? Then perhaps the nuns, who had just taken the habit, might find the house too small, the Rule too strict. Why had she meddled in such matters, with her own home at the Incarnation open to her? Strangely enough, she forgot all the reasonings and consultations and prayers and lights of the past years. She only remembered that she had had an opinion of her own, and that she had followed it. Then as to herself, could she really bear the hard life which was to be led at the new convent? She thought of the large roomy house of the Incarnation, the happiness of her life there, her many dear friends whom she would have to leave. How could she tell that she would like the members of the new community? How could she tell that all this was not a trick of the evil one himself, who wished to put her in a place where she would have no content or



peace, where, in consequence, she would be unable to practise prayer, and so would lose her soul?

She was in great trouble and perplexity ; but our Lord did not forsake her. At first, when she went before the Blessed Sacrament, she could not pray. But by little degrees her mind recovered itself. She called to mind her resolutions and desires to serve God and suffer for His sake. Why should she seek to be at rest? If she was to suffer, her sufferings would be meritorious. What she endured in order to please God would serve for her Purgatory. She had her wish now, for she had wished for tribulations, and she could not but gain by them, however severe they might be. Why did she fail in courage to serve God, Who had done so much for her? She went on praying before the Blessed Sacrament, and doing, as she says, great violence to herself, she promised to do all in her power to obtain permission to enter the new convent, and, if she could do it with a good conscience, to make a vow of enclosure. Then the tempter fled, and she remained calm and in peace. When she came to write of all this, she was able to say that the enclosure and penance and rules of the Strict Observance as practised in that house were all sweet and delightful to her, and that her joy there was so exceeding great, that she sometimes thought what on earth she could have chosen which would have given her more delight. Her health had become better and she was able, though with some difficulty, to keep the whole Rule.

But though the interior conflict was over, there was plenty more outside. She was resting a little:



after the early dinner of the new community—and she needed rest much, she tells us, for she had had none for some time—when she was summoned peremptorily by the Prioress of the Incarnation to come to her immediately. Not only the convent, but the city, was in an uproar. The news of what had passed had spread through the town and had reached the Convent of the Incarnation outside the walls. When people take fright at such things as the founding of a new religious house, they are very much frightened indeed. Teresa knew what she must expect. She obeyed the order at once, tearing herself with much pain from the four poor children whom she was leaving, as it were, to their fate. But anyhow, the work was done, the foundation was made. She implored our Lord to help her, and begged St. Joseph to bring her back to his house. She offered to him all that she was to suffer, rejoicing in the opportunity of having anything of the kind to offer to him. She left Ursula of the Saints Superior in her own place. She expected great penances and the solitary confinement of the “prison,” as it was called, but she had made up her mind to bear all in silence.

It is a loss to us in many ways that we have no account of the scene which now passed in the Convent of the Incarnation, except from Teresa herself. Her own narrative we could not dispense with, but it is the account given by a Saint of her own behaviour, and it necessarily leaves out many features which would most forcibly strike those who looked at her from outside. She presented herself to

the Prioress, and at once this good Superior was half won over. "She was softened a little," says Teresa. How was she softened, but by the incomparable sweetness, humility, and dignity of Teresa herself? But the true trial of the supposed delinquent was held before the Provincial, who was invited to the convent in all haste. Teresa bethought herself of our Lord's demeanour before His judges, and determined to imitate Him in suffering without self-defence. "I did not think," she says, "I had offended against His Majesty, or against my Order, in anything I had done; on the contrary, I was striving with all my might to exalt my Order, for which I would willingly have died." But she held her peace. When she was reprimanded severely by Father Angelo, she said nothing, but confessed her fault as if she had been very much to blame. She acknowledges that persons who did not know why she had acted as she had, might very well blame her. It is evident that here again the sweetness and humility of the Saint won round her judge. The Provincial reprimanded her, but with less severity than the charges against her seemed to deserve.

The good nuns, however, were not quite satisfied. Father Angelo seemed to be too indulgent. So there arose a tempest of gentle tongues, the expression of that kind of plaintive alarmed indignation, neither very bitter nor very forgiving, of which so large a number of religious women—there were a hundred and eighty of them—who considered the honour of their house touched, were capable, and all the charges against Teresa were repeated. She had founded the

new convent, forsooth, that she might make herself a name as a Reformer. Other motives of vanity and self-seeking were suggested. Then, she was not nearly so good as the other nuns of the Incarnation, on whom she was casting this slur. She had not kept the Rule in that house—how was she going to keep a more severe Rule in the other? She was giving scandal in the city and setting up novelties. She did not feel these things the least, she acknowledged in her own heart the truth that she was worse than others, and the other charges only made her rejoice or laugh interiorly. But with exquisite delicacy and charity, “in order not to displease them more,” as she says, she made as if she cared a great deal for all that was said. She loved them all from her heart, far too much to pain them by apparent contempt.

Her silence made the Provincial give her a positive order to explain herself. Then she calmly told them all, in a few words, the whole line and all the motives of her conduct. It is here that we should like to have the account of the witness to this strange trial. Later on in the history we have another speech which Teresa made to these same ladies of the Incarnation, who were then also in high indignation on her account, and no one can read it without being struck, not only with its calm dignity, but also with its extreme skill. Unfortunately we can only imagine what St. Teresa would tell them now, of the reasons which had led her to desire and design the foundation of the new convent, how she had felt it right to keep her secret, how she had all along been guided by the advice of learned men and of saints, and how she

had simply sought the glory of God and the benefit of the Order of Mount Carmel. It could not have been very easy to bring them all round at once to understand all these points, and it shows their love for her, as well as her wonderful grace and power, that when she had ended, no one could find any fault with her. The Provincial afterwards had a long conversation with her in private. To him she could speak more freely and openly than to the assembled nuns, and he was so well satisfied with her, that he promised to allow her to go and live in the new convent as soon as the condition of affairs outside made it prudent for him to do so.

But there was a storm outside as well as within the peaceful walls of the Convent of the Incarnation, a storm amid rougher minds and more undisciplined hearts, and before them at least St. Teresa could not plead her own cause. The whole city was in an uproar. If the plague had broken out, or if a hostile army had appeared at the gates, there could scarcely have been more alarm. The open profession of the Evangelical Counsels is always a rebuke to the world and the flesh, and on this occasion the good people of Avila bore witness to this truth. A day or two were allowed to pass before the authorities thought it their duty to interfere in a matter so dangerous to the welfare of the city. The Corregidor assembled his subordinate officials, the "aldermen" or "common council" as we should call them, and, with the assistance of some members of the Cathedral Chapter, took cognizance of the business. The city had enough of convents, and this new demand on the

charity of its faithful inhabitants might ruin it. The most hostile measures were proposed—the removal of the Blessed Sacrament from the little chapel, and the consequent dispersion of the four poor orphans whose presence in St. Joseph's constituted so grave a menace to the public good. However, there must be more deliberation before an act was resolved on which might perhaps compromise the city with the authority of the Bishop, not to say other authorities still higher than his. So there was an assembly of notables convened for the next day. The municipal authorities were there in force. Two members of each of the Religious Orders in the town were invited. There were also learned men, lawyers, and some others who may have been considered as representatives of the inhabitants in general. The common feeling was strong for the destruction of the convent. Few voices seem to have been lifted in defence of the absent, though it is not likely that they were unrepresented. Francis of Salcedo, Master Daza, Gonzalez de Aranda, and one or two more, may have been acting on the part of the convent, but they do not seem to have had the courage to stem the fierce tide running against it.

It was almost settled that the destruction of the new foundation should be consummated then and there, when the precipitate resolution was arrested by a man whose name lives in the history of the Church of this time for achievements of a very different kind from the defence of a convent of poor Discalced Carmelites. All students of theology have heard of the famous Dominican, Fra Domingo Bañez.

He was one of the foremost men of his day and of his Order, but, at the date of which we are speaking, his celebrity had not reached its height. He had been eighteen years, however, in the Order, and was already known for his great ability as a professor of theology, though the books, in which he sets forth his system of "physical predetermination" as the explanation of the action of grace on the free-will of man, were not published for twenty years after this time. He was a man of great piety and prayer, as well as of great learning, and although he was not as yet known to St. Teresa, he became her constant friend almost from this time. In the last twenty years of her life she seldom did anything without consulting him. It is curious to find a man whose name in the Church is chiefly famous for the thorny disputes of the Congregation *de Auxiliis*, to which his attack on the system of Molina gave rise, coming forward just at this most critical moment, to protect the infant Reform of the Order of Mount Carmel.

But Fra Bañez was accustomed to speak with precision and authority, and as he happened at this time to be in Avila, he was invited to join the assembly at which the measures to be taken with Teresa's new work were discussed. As the matter was almost concluded Fra Bañez rose to speak. He did not, he said, wish to see the new convent founded without revenues. He was not acquainted with Teresa de Ahumada, and had no motive for speaking except love of truth. It seemed to him that the affair was being dismissed with passion and precipi-

tancy. The objection to the poverty of the convent was no reason for its entire destruction. The establishment of a new convent could hurt neither the Church nor the State. The Church had been greatly glorified by the creation of new Orders. It could not but be useful to multiply them, and in this case there was question, not of a new Order, but of the return of an old Order to its primitive fervour. It would be a great thing for any Order to have persons in it so zealous and so courageous as Teresa de Ahumada. Four poor religious women, living in solitude, prayer, and penance, could give no offence to any one. If he disliked their living without endowment, it was more because of their own possible sufferings than because the city of Avila could not support them. Teresa had acted by virtue of a Brief of the Pope, and with the permission of the Bishop of Avila. If, therefore, there was any irregularity in the foundation, it was more proper to confer on the matter with his lordship, than to proceed at once to the destruction of the convent without him. After the speech of Fra Bañez, the meeting was adjourned without coming to any definite conclusion.

But the storm was not appeased. Fra Bañez had saved the new convent from immediate destruction, but no more. The minds of the people in the city, who had taken up the matter so violently, were not satisfied. The new house was still the talk of the town; and great pressure was brought to bear on the Provincial of the Carmelites and on the nuns of the Incarnation to induce them to take a strong part against it. Teresa was quiet in her own cell

at the Incarnation. Her only fear was that the house might be destroyed, her only pain that some of her friends in the city were evil-spoken of, for her sake. Our Lord consoled her: "Was He not all-powerful?" He promised her also that the house should continue unhurt.

Though unable to live with her dear novices, she was still allowed to help them by means of her friends. Doña Guiomar had returned, and, at Teresa's request, she procured a missal, a bell, and some other necessities. At the same time Teresa got a *supplica* to Rome drawn up asking for the permission to live without revenues. It is evident that she owed a great deal to the kindness of the Provincial, for when he went away, the Prioress of the Incarnation forbade her to have anything to do with the providing for the convent. It was the same, she says, as to bid her to abandon it altogether. She went to the choir, and said to our Lord that the house was not hers but His, it had been made for Him, now that there was no one to take care of it, it became His business.

The four new nuns, meanwhile, were quiet and happy in their solitude, wanting nothing more than that Teresa should be allowed to join them. Master Gaspar had been charged by the Bishop to look after their spiritual necessities, and he said Mass for them and heard their confessions. He gave them instructions and exhortations. The Rule was observed as well as was possible. Chapters were duly held, the penances prescribed by the Order were observed. The nuns recited the Little Office of our Lady in



choir, waiting for Teresa to come and teach them to recite the Divine Office. One day the Corregidor made his appearance at the gate and gave orders to the four religious to leave the convent. They replied quietly that it belonged to no one to bid them leave but to him who had bade them enter; the Corregidor had no authority over them, for they had a Superior of their own. He abstained from executing the threat he had made, that if they did not leave he would have the gates broken down. It seems that after this the Bishop declared himself on the side of the nuns. This did not stop the Corregidor. He convoked another assembly, more numerous, says Ribera, than the two former meetings, and, notwithstanding all that Gaspar Daza and others could say on behalf of the Bishop and of the nuns, the matter was about to be decided definitively against the convent, when Teresa's friend, Gonzalez de Aranda and Francisco Salcedo, joined Master Gaspar in appealing to the Royal Council.

Of course this appeal silenced for the moment the opposition to the new convent. It could go on under the authority of the Bishop, at least until the cause was decided by the Royal Council. But the cause involved great expense, and much sacrifice of time and trouble on the part of the good friends of St. Teresa who had taken up the affair so warmly. Gonzalez de Aranda was deputed to go to Madrid and urge on the suit, and on the part of the town other deputies were sent. At last a commission was appointed to examine the affair on the spot, and this again could not be carried out without expense.

Teresa tells us that our Lord provided for all her needs in a marvellous manner. The influence of the Corregidor and his friends was exerted to the utmost, and most people were afraid to oppose him in a matter which he had so much at heart. It was difficult to get even the usual legal representatives on the side of the nuns. But in the end the higher authority took a more liberal and reasonable view than the petty provincial magistrate. The cause was decided in favour of the toleration of the convent.

It would certainly have been a very strange termination, in a Catholic country, if it had been found, by the highest authority, contrary to the public interest to allow a dozen poor young women to live together in poverty and the practice of penance, spending their days and nights in prayer, and content with what sustenance they might receive from the charity of the faithful. But more strange conclusions have sometimes forced themselves on minds more familiar with sacred things than those of the councillors of Philip II. If the history of the opposition of good people—even ecclesiastics and religious men—to good works, could be written, it would be one of the strangest and longest chapters in the annals of the Church. It appears that the decision of the Royal Council was not given without the accompaniment of a severe censure on the conduct of the worthy Corregidor. This legal victory did not by any means settle all the questions which might be raised concerning the new foundation, nor did it put an end to the cares and anxiety of St. Teresa. The old point of the perfect poverty of the convent, in

being founded without any revenues of its own, came up again. This was the last and final struggle. It was proposed that the town should tolerate the convent on condition that it was endowed. The desire for peace, and perhaps, more than all, the desire to relieve her friends from the persecution they were exposed to, or at least from the life of conflict and strain which they were leading for her sake, made Teresa once more inclined to waver.

"I was so distressed," she says, "at the trouble of all those who were on our side—more than at my own—that I thought it would not be amiss, till the people were pacified, to accept an endowment, and afterwards to resign it. At other times, too, wicked and imperfect as I am, I thought that perhaps our Lord wished it to be so, seeing that without accepting it we should not succeed, and so I consented to the compromise." But it was not so to be, and the fact shows the importance of the principle in the eyes of God, all the more because, as we shall see, the time came when the convents of the Reform of St. Teresa were not usually founded without endowments. Nevertheless the principle was to be affirmed at all costs. "The night before the settlement was to be made I was in prayer—the discussion of the terms of it had already begun—when our Lord said to me that I must do nothing of the kind ; for, if we began with an endowment, they would never allow us to resign it. He said some other things also."

She had also another vision. The holy old man, St. Peter of Alcantara, had passed to his reward on October the 18th, nearly two months after the

foundation of the Convent of St. Joseph. Up to the very last he had continued to support St. Teresa to the utmost, and only four or five days before his death he had written her a letter on this very subject. Master Daza had sent Francisco de Salcedo to the dying Saint to inform him of the persecution which was raging against the new foundation. St. Peter took up the matter again, and sent some advice to Master Daza about the best means of converting the opponents of the convent into its friends. He also wrote to Teresa, bidding her take courage, saying that the troubles which beset the new house were marks that it was dear to God, and would serve to His glory, and telling her also that her afflictions would soon cease. This had happened, as we say, in the October of 1562. She was by no means to yield, St. Peter had said, to the reasonings of those who were persuading her to give way. But at the time of which we were speaking she had already, as has been said, made up her mind, for the sake of peace, to yield, as she thought, for a time. St. Peter appeared to her, not for the first time since his death. "At this time I had already seen him twice since his death, and the great glory he was in, so that I was not afraid—on the contrary, I was very glad—for he always appeared to me as a glorified body in great happiness, and the vision made me very happy too. I remembered he told me, the first time I saw him, among other things, when speaking of the greatness of his joy, that the penance he had done was a blessed thing for him, in that it had obtained so great a reward. . . . He showed himself severe on this

occasion ; he merely said I was on no account to accept an endowment, and asked why it was I did not take his advice. He then disappeared. I remained in astonishment, and the next day told the nobleman"—Francis de Salcedo—"for I went to him in all my trouble, as to one who did more for us than others in the matter—what had taken place, and charged him not to consent to the endowment, and to let the lawsuit go on. He was more firm on this point than I was, and was therefore greatly pleased ; he told me afterwards how much he disliked the compromise."<sup>2</sup>

There was still another snare to be avoided, a snare laid by the means of a good servant of God, we are not told who it was, that, with the best intentions in the world, proposed that the contending parties should consent to abide by the decision of some learned men selected by both sides. This was, in truth, to upset the whole business, and to expose Teresa and her friends to the suspicion of obstinacy in case of their refusal. It was difficult to avoid the snare, but it was avoided, though we are not told how the refusal was put, or how it was met. It would appear that the strict right of the case was now on the side of the convent, as the decision had been given by the Royal Council in favour of the nuns. But the inveterate opponents of the Reform endeavoured to continue the warfare by proposal after proposal, which involved, on the part of St. Teresa, some sacrifice of principle.

But another friend intervened. Just at the right

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, c. xxxvi. 21.

time Fra Ybañez came to Avila. His influence was very great, and he finally succeeded in calming the storm. His coming was quite providential, for, as St. Teresa says, he only stayed in the city long enough to manage this affair, and he had no special reason for coming there at that time. It must, however, be remembered that thousands of prayers had risen up to Heaven for the attainment of the object which St. Teresa had so much at heart, and that her own well-known virtues, the prudence and the charity which she had shown under the trial of persecution and general discouragement which she had undergone, and also the calm patience with which her four orphaned children at St. Joseph's had borne their part of the trouble, could hardly fail to produce a very favourable impression among the people, who were not, after all, so much the enemies of religion as good persons of narrow minds, frightened out of their senses by the very practical preaching indeed of the Gospel counsels of perfection close to their own doors. These things had no doubt prepared the way for the work of Fra Ybañez. We are not told exactly how he managed to extinguish the last flames of opposition, but we know that he succeeded in his object.

Fra Ybañez did much more than this. The Provincial of the Carmelites, Angelo de Salazar, had been immensely impressed by what he had seen of Teresa, and had become desirous of aiding her to the utmost of his power, so long as this could be done without arousing a fresh storm against himself. It was not enough for the new convent to be allowed to exist without a foundation. It was above all things

necessary that the new nuns should be trained to their high religious duties, and that St. Teresa should train them herself. At present they were living in great peace, and with an admirable spirit of self-conquest and prayer, making their confessions to and receiving spiritual instructions from Master Daza, whom the Bishop had appointed to take charge of them. But they could not as yet even recite the Divine Office, and in far more important, or, at least, more difficult things, they had need of guidance and formation. Fra Ybañez, according to St. Teresa, prevailed upon Father Angelo to allow her to join them at St. Joseph's. This happy consummation of her victory over the opposition to her work came about in the middle of March, 1563. It is probable that St. Teresa's own account is somewhat coloured by her own humility and her desire to hide her part in anything great and wonderful. Father Angelo survived the Saint, and was a witness in the process of her canonization. His account is that he was still irresolute as to giving her the permission, which was so necessary for the welfare of the new convent, when she said to him gravely and solemnly, "Take care, Father, not to resist the Holy Ghost."

It was the middle of Lent, and just about the feast of St. Joseph, that Teresa was thus able to pass to the community which owed its existence, under God, to her. What was even more in her own eyes, Teresa was also allowed to take with her some nuns from the Convent of the Incarnation. Thus the little community was swelled in numbers and recruited by religious who had long been accustomed to the

observances of the Order. That there were religious ready to join in the new Reform is an evidence of the effect which the holiness and influence of Teresa had produced in her own community. We shall find that these were not the only nuns of the Incarnation who were to become conspicuous in the annals of the New Carmel. The four who accompanied St. Teresa to the Convent of St. Joseph, were Anne of St. John, Anne of All the Angels, Maria Isabel, and Isabella of St. Paul. St. Teresa had no intention of being more than a simple member of the new community. She appointed Anne of St. John Prioress, and gave her Anne of All the Angels for Subprioress. This, however, was immediately objected to. The Bishop, under whom the convent had been placed, was appealed to, and he obliged Teresa herself to take the office of Prioress. The Provincial supported him, and she thus became charged with the conduct of the work which she had so happily begun. This involved a formal transfer of Teresa to the new convent. She now took the habit of the Reform, and called herself henceforth Teresa of Jesus instead of Teresa de Ahumada.

It need not be said how great was the joy of the four first novices to find themselves under the care of their beloved Mother, and the companions of the fervent religious who had accompanied her from the Incarnation. The last-named of the new recruits was St. Teresa's niece, who had remained for some years in the Convent of the Incarnation without making her vows—in order to make them in the new convent, when it should be established. This shows us how



long the design of the foundation of St. Joseph's had been talked of by St. Teresa and her intimates in the Convent of the Incarnation. Isabella of St. Paul, therefore, was the first to be professed in the new Reform. Our Lord welcomed Teresa to the new community by many spiritual favours. "When praying in the church, before I went into the house," she says, "and being as it were in a trance, I saw Christ, Who, as it seemed to me, received me with great affection, placed a crown on my head, and thanked me for what I had done for His Mother. On another occasion, when all of us remained in the choir in prayer after Compline, I saw our Lady in exceeding glory, in a white mantle, with which she seemed to cover us all. I understood by that the high degree of glory to which our Lord would raise the religious of this house." She tells us further how the enemies of the foundation came round to be its friends. "When we began to sing the Office, the people began to have a great devotion to the monastery; more nuns were received, and our Lord began to stir up those who had been our greatest persecutors to become great benefactors and to give alms to us. In this way they came to approve of what they had condemned, and so by degrees they withdrew from the lawsuit, and would say that they now felt it to be a work of God, since His Majesty had been pleased to carry it on in the face of so much opposition. And now there is no one who thinks it would have been right not to have founded the monastery; so they make a point of furnishing us with alms; for without asking on our part, without begging of any one, our

Lord moves them to succour us ; and so we always have what is necessary for us.”<sup>3</sup>

We shall see in the next chapter that though the nuns at St. Joseph's were never long in want, they had occasional experience both of the trials of poverty and of God's wonderful goodness in relieving it. The temporal means of the convent were soon increased, as fresh novices entered it. The first, as it seems, to join the community after St. Teresa's arrival was the young Maria de Ocampo, of whom we have already heard as having offered a part of her fortune to begin the good work. It was not without a considerable struggle that Maria finally made up her mind to follow her aunt. We are told that after the memorable day, already mentioned above, when our Lord appeared to her, thanking her for her generosity in His service, she suffered severe temptations against faith, and felt a strong repugnance to prayer. One day, however, she was in the choir of the Convent of the Incarnation with St. Teresa, and the latter was made preternaturally cognizant of the state of her soul. She gave her a chapter of the *Imitation of Christ* to read, and Maria complied out of deference to her aunt. On doing this she found herself changed, and confirmed in her former resolution. We find the date of her entrance at St. Joseph's variously given by different authorities, but it seems most probable that she became a postulant within a year from the foundation. Her name became “Mary Baptist.” Her dowry sufficed to relieve the convent of a rent which it had to pay, and to enable St. Teresa to build a few

<sup>3</sup> *Life*, c. xxxvi.

little hermitages in the garden where the religious might pray in retirement from time to time. Maria, like St. Teresa herself, had a great devotion to little chapels of this kind, and those which were built at St. Joseph's were embellished with paintings which moved all the spectators to piety. St. Teresa would not allow the father of this novice to give anything more to the convent by way of dowry.

Another of her relatives entered St. Joseph's in the following September. This was Doña Maria de Avila, the daughter of a certain nobleman, Alonzo Alvarez de Avila, who was so respected for his piety as to be commonly called Alonzo Alvarez the Saint. The entrance of this young lady was a kind of triumph over the world such as is seldom seen. She was her father's only child, the heiress to all his fortune, and already in possession of a large fortune of her own. She had much of the old Castilian pride about her, and had refused, as beneath her acceptance, many noble alliances which had been offered her. She came to the convent dressed in her richest robes, glittering with golden ornaments and precious stones. The whole nobility of the city accompanied her, for she was related to the highest families. She had undergone a severe interior conflict before she could make up her mind to surrender herself to the call of our Lord. But, as soon as she had made the sacrifice in her own heart, a flood of peace came over her soul, and the kind of solemn pomp with which she came to the convent was the index of the irrevocable resolution and ineffable joy with which she gave herself and all that she had to God. After having been

received in the choir by Teresa, she appeared in the simple and humble garment of the novices of Mount Carmel. She took the name of Mary of St. Jerome, and we shall often meet her in the sequel of this history.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### *Life at St. Joseph's.*

THE rule which was observed at the new Convent of St. Joseph's, and for the introduction of which St. Teresa thought it well to suffer and labour as she did, was the primitive rule of the Order of Mount Carmel, composed by St. Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem, in 1205, at the request of St. Brocard, Prior of the Carmelites in Palestine. This rule was approved by Honorius II. in 1224. It was afterwards revised by two commissaries appointed by Innocent IV., at the request of St. Simon Stock, then General of the Order. These commissaries were Hugo a Sancto Caro, Cardinal of Santa Sabina, and William, Bishop of Antarados. But Eugenius IV. afterwards modified the rule considerably, and it was the mitigation of the rule of St. Albert that was observed in the Convent of the Incarnation and elsewhere in the time before the Reform of St. Teresa, and, after that time, in the convents of the "Mitigation."

The original rule had ordered that the religious should fast from the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14) to the feast of Easter. The mitigation conceded by Eugenius IV. allowed

this fast to be observed only on the Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. The original rule forbade the use of flesh-meat at any time except in case of sickness. The mitigation of Pope Eugenius allowed flesh-meat, except on fasting-days. These were two considerable differences. It appears also that there were great mitigations as to the observance of silence and solitude. According to the primitive rule, the religious were to remain in their cells or near them, "meditating day and night the law of the Lord, and watching in prayer, except when they were occupied in other lawful occupations." This seems to have been variously understood. And the practice of the Convent of the Incarnation, and others, did not preclude considerable liberty in the admission of visits, and other distractions and recreations.

The rule established by Teresa in her convents was strict as to the observance of the rules of fasting and abstinence; in this respect the return to the primitive observance was entire. As to the silence, it was to be observed strictly and rigorously from the end of Compline to the end of Prime the next morning. At other times it was observed with strictness, but not so absolutely, and in this the custom was similar to that of other Religious Orders. After dinner and supper the Prioress could allow recreation to the Sisters for the space of an hour. The rule as to prayer was as follows—Matins were recited at nine in the evening; after this a quarter of an hour was given to the examination of the actions of the day: then the religious read over the points of the mystery on which they were to meditate the next

morning, so that all was to be over neither much before nor much later than eleven. Then the bell rang, and all went to rest. In summer the nuns rose at five, and meditated till six. In winter they rose at six, and meditated till seven. The Hours were said before Mass. The time which was spent in work was to be occupied in some simple work, spinning and the like, such as did not prevent the soul from dwelling on God while the hands were employed. No religious was to have a fixed amount given her for a particular time, lest she should give herself to it with excessive ardour, and so distract herself about it when she was at prayer. Teresa rejected the plan of having the religious work together in one common room, and preferred that each should work in her own cell, so as to be better able to raise her heart to God while she was at work.

Dinner was of course early, as in all religious houses in those days. A little before dinner-time the bell rang, and self-examination was made as to the actions of the day up to that time. Vespers were said at two, after that there was spiritual reading in common till three, and the religious were at liberty to spend this time also in prayer. Then they went to their duties in the house, and Compline followed later in the afternoon, after which there was another hour of prayer. At recreation, the nuns were to have some manual work for their occupation.

Poverty was observed with great simplicity and fulness. No one could have anything of her own, and everything necessary was given to her by the community, so that she had nothing to ask for from

her relations. There were no chests or drawers in the cells, and if any religious was observed to be attached to the least thing, it was taken from her. The habit, scapular, mantle, veil, and in short the whole of the dress and of the bed furniture and linen were to be of the poorest kind. Teresa is said to have copied the arrangements for the refectory, table-linen, and the like, from a convent of Discalced Franciscanesses at Valladolid where she once spent some time. At first there were no lay-sisters at St. Joseph's and the other convents founded by her, but she afterwards changed this arrangement, and kept the choir nuns from work which was so fatiguing to the body as that of the kitchen and other such offices. We shall see presently how large she wished her rule to be as to the freedom of the nuns to consult in the confessional men of learning and piety, other than their ordinary confessors, and for this reason among others she did not wish them to be subject to the religious of her own Order exclusively. She had been so impressed by the mischief of a large number of religious living together in the Convent of the Incarnation, that she limited the number at St. Joseph's to thirteen or fourteen. This arrangement also was modified at a later period.

St. Teresa added to the primitive rule certain observances which are called in her Order "fundamental." These observances consist in the going barefoot, that is, with the kind of sandal called "alpergate," in the care of great poverty in food, in having two planks for the bed, and only a single covering, in taking the discipline frequently, and in

the two hours of prayer already mentioned as part of the daily routine. She tells us herself that she made these additions in order that her nuns might practise in greater perfection the evangelical counsels, and that she was moved to this by her immense distress at the progress which was being made in France by the heretics, who were at that time threatening to rob the Church of that great kingdom. She desired to make her prayers for the preachers of the Gospel and the defenders of the Catholic faith more efficacious, and so do what she could for the service of God in reclaiming the strayed sheep of the fold.

It may be well to add in this place a few words about the Constitutions which St. Teresa drew up for her convents, with the help, as his biographer tells us, of Father Balthasar Alvarez.<sup>1</sup> Any one familiar with the Institute of St. Ignatius will see at a glance that many things in St. Teresa's rule have been suggested thereby. St. Teresa submitted her Constitutions to the judgment and approval of Fra Ybañez and Don Alvarez de Mendoza, the Bishop of Avila, and they were approved by Pius IV. in 1565. They were also confirmed in the Chapter of the Carmelite Reform, held at Alcala de Henares, in the Lent of 1581, by the Apostolic Commissary, Fra Juan de las Cuevas, of the Order of St. Dominic, by Father Jerome Gratian, the Provincial, and his definitors. They were afterwards approved and confirmed for all time by Cesare Speciano, Bishop of Novara, the Pope's Nuncio at Madrid in 1588. Among their provisions may be mentioned that which forbids the reception

<sup>1</sup> De la Puente, *Vita*, c. xi.



of nuns of other Orders, a great number of whom appear to have applied to St. Teresa from time to time for admission. This prohibition extended even to the Carmelites of the Mitigated Rule, though, in the beginning of her foundations, St. Teresa took several nuns from the Convent of the Incarnation. But she afterwards altered her practice in this respect, as will be seen.

The persons to be received as novices were to be persons given to prayer, animated by a true desire of perfection and contempt for the world. They were to be in good health, of good understanding, and at least seventeen years of age. Those who had good vocations were not to be refused even if they had no dowry. The observance of cloister was to be as strict as might have been expected from St. Teresa, who had herself experienced so many of the dangers of intercourse with those outside the convent walls. The grille was not to be opened, or the nuns allowed to raise their veils, to speak with any but the nearest relations and a few persons of interior spirit and edification of life and character. The object of the conversations which were allowed was to be the good of the soul alone. The novices might be freely visited, for St. Teresa wished it to be seen that they were in the house of their own good-will, and might leave it if they chose. On the other hand, there was to be, as has been said, great freedom for the nuns to hear sermons and hold conversations about their interior state with men of learning and piety. They were also allowed the use of penances other than those prescribed by the rule, with the leave

of their confessor and superior. Chapters were to be held once a week, in which they accused themselves of their faults, and were also to aid one another by pointing out any faults which they had observed. St. Teresa also showed great largeness in the regulations which she made for the frequent use of Holy Communion. The nuns were to communicate on all Sundays, all feasts of our Blessed Lord and our Blessed Lady, of St. Joseph, St. Albert, on Holy Thursday, and all other days when the confessor thought right, with the approval of the Prioress.

St. Teresa herself was, as might have been expected, the living model of all religious virtues to her children, and especially of the diligent observance of the rule which she had thus restored and supplemented. She was continually to be seen occupied in the lowest offices of the houses, helping in the kitchen, serving in the infirmary, sweeping the dirtiest places, and the like. She was occupied, as we shall presently see, in writing some of her most famous and beautiful works at this time, but she preferred, when she could, to spend her moments of leisure in the simplest manual work. The meanest and commonest articles she chose for her own use—her cell was the most uncomfortable of all. In the refectory or in chapter, she was to be heard accusing herself with the deepest contrition of faults which no one but herself could have considered such, and when her companions did not see anything to blame in them, she accused herself in public of the faults of her past years. She prayed the nuns with tears to admonish her of her defects. Notwithstanding her

weak health and her constant headaches, she would not be dispensed from the austerities of the rule, and often inflicted on herself the severest penances.

It is not wonderful that, while the few months which passed before the termination of the struggle for the foundation and security of the Convent of St. Joseph, are so full of incidents as to require considerable space for the narrative which relates them, the subsequent time, between four and five years in duration, which passed away before St. Teresa's history was broken by any striking event, should have been so uniform and tranquil as to seem to have had no incidents. They were years of extreme happiness and peace. Their history is rich in the sight of Heaven, but its events were spiritual events, favours from God and faithful correspondence to grace, the interior victories and blessings of which the external world has no idea, and which are to it foolishness. A very few more arrivals of recruits soon made up the number of the inmates of St. Joseph's to its slender limit. We are told that the dependence of Teresa on the good providence of God, without any temporal provision for the sustenance of her community, was now and then put to the test, but it never failed. On several occasions there was nothing to put on the refectory table after the grace had been said. St. Teresa then offered the little food that could be scraped together to those whom she considered to need it most, but it was always refused. Then, in a few minutes, some unexpected supply would arrive, which enabled them to tide over the immediate necessity. The same kind of miracle occurred when the

community had no means of providing for the sick, who were in need of something out of the common way in respect of food or medicines.

Teresa herself tells us of the great faith and perfect obedience of the nuns. Once she told Mary Baptist, her niece, to plant in the garden a rotten cucumber which had been served up at table, and the young novice simply asked whether it should be planted endways or sideways, and when told the latter, obeyed without any hesitation. The same novice showed her faith on occasion of the necessity under which the community lay with regard to their supply of water. They had a well in a very bad place, and the water from it was both scanty and bad. The question was raised whether it was worth while to spend money on endeavouring to have this water conveyed to another part of the premises, where it was hoped it might be more salubrious. Mary Baptist, when asked her opinion, declared in favour of the attempt, notwithstanding the apparent risk of its being made in vain. She said that our Lord was bound to provide them with water, and that it would cost Him less to do this from the source already within the convent walls than from outside. On the strength of this simple reasoning, St. Teresa ordered the workmen to proceed, and the nuns soon had a sufficient flow of good water from their own well, a flow which lasted for several years, and then ceased when a new supply was furnished from outside. This wonder was officially examined and attested by the Bishop of Avila. This well was called after Mary Baptist.

It may be remembered that there was a small house adjoining the Convent of St. Joseph, which Teresa had been desirous of buying at the time when the convent was being built, when our Lord reproached her for wishing for too much. The house was not bought at that time. Later on, we find mention of what was probably the same tenement, and of the desire of the nuns to purchase it in order to make their own house a little more roomy. The owner, however, would not hear of parting with his property. He said he would never sell it as long as he lived. Its chief attraction to him, however, was a garden, and this garden was kept fresh and flourishing by a supply of water, which he obtained by quietly turning off for his own benefit a part of a little stream which belonged to the town. This had gone on for many years, when, just at the time when the nuns were endeavouring to persuade him to sell his property, the fraud was discovered, and the surreptitious supply of water was cut off. After this he made no more difficulty as to the sale of the house to Teresa and her nuns. Such are the few incidents which remain to us of these happy years after the foundation of St. Joseph's Convent.

We have however one most interesting and important work of Teresa herself which was composed during the first happy years at St. Joseph's, and which is sufficient, not only to console us for the scantiness of historical details of this period, but even in some measure to lift the veil which hides from us so much of the interior life of Teresa and her community. This is her famous work called the *Way*

*of Perfection.* It was written at the request of the nuns of St. Joseph's, and embodies that teaching of St. Teresa as to the spiritual life which she thought appropriate to her children in this her first foundation. We may well devote the remainder of the present chapter to a short account of this great work, all the more as it happens that we have only had it in its integrity since the appearance of the late French translation of Père Bouix. It appears that St. Teresa wrote this treatise twice over—the first time, during the period of which we are now speaking, the years between 1563 and 1567, when she was in retirement in her newly founded Convent of St. Joseph; the second time some years later, when she had already founded some other convents besides that of Avila. It cannot have been before 1569 that this second copy was made by Teresa. She seems to have modified the former work to some extent, and given it its final perfection. The autograph manuscripts of both copies exist. The first is in the Escorial, the second is, or was, at the convent of the Carmelites at Valladolid. The Madrid edition of the works of St. Teresa gives the book differently from both manuscripts, and it is particularly divergent from the latest and best autograph, that of Valladolid. This manuscript was carefully copied and then translated by Père Bouix, who has devoted so much of his life to the publication in French of the works of the Saint of Avila.

Teresa was in her mature prime of sanctity when she wrote this book for the first time. She was about fifty years of age. Ten years had passed since she had finally broken through the hindrances which stood in

the way of her perfect and heroic devotion to the will of God, and five years or more since she had met with Father Balthasar Alvarez, who had been of such signal service to her at what was in a very true sense the turning-point in her great career. In a book written at the request of her spiritual children and for the purpose of helping them on in the way of perfection, we may be sure that we have the very flower of her mind and heart. It cannot be doubted that her own experience enters largely into the directions and counsels which she here gives, nor on the other hand can we fail to see that she is all through considering the needs of the particular set of religious for whom she is writing. Thus the book becomes a sort of revelation of the interior of St. Joseph's at Avila during these happy years of peace, not exactly a picture, either of Teresa or her companions, but still a record which echoes very faithfully, if not entirely, the advice and guidance which she gave them during the daily intercourse with her which it was their great privilege to enjoy. It is in this light that we shall try to view it in the few remarks which we are able to devote to it.

The opening chapter of the work of which we are speaking shows at once the true spirit of the new Carmel. Teresa says, as has been hinted above, that she had at first no intention of insisting on so great austerity of life, or on the foundation of the convent without revenues sufficient to support it. But when she came to know the ravages that heresy was making in France and other countries, she conceived the desire of doing everything in her power

to make her prayers for the servants of God who were defending the faith more efficacious, and that this made her take the resolution of which we have heard so much. It is clear, therefore, that the Carmel of St. Teresa is essentially apostolic in principle. She breaks out into a beautiful and most touching passage about the cruelty of the heretics to our Lord. Then she goes on to speak of what possibly occupied the minds of the little community from time to time—the danger that they should come to real misery and destitution by the poverty which they practised. It has already been said that they were not without their experiences, from time to time, of the sharp effects of actual poverty, and it may well have been an anxiety and a trial to many of them, whether the young novices who had come in from the outer world without any experience of privation, or the ladies of the Incarnation, who had migrated to St. Joseph's from the large community in which the wants of the members were occasionally supplied by means of relatives and visits. St. Teresa exhorts her children to that perfect confidence in God which alone can make persons in such circumstances really at peace, and raise them above the cares of temporal things. She begs them, as an alms to her, for the love of God, to have no pre-occupations about such matters. She would rather see them endowed than full of such cares. It is here that we find her celebrated words about the foolishness of anything like magnificence in religious buildings. Everything is to fall to pieces at the Day of Judgment, and it would not be becoming



that the dwelling of thirteen poor nuns should make a great noise when it falls. Then what a joy if they can deliver but one soul from Hell by means of the alms they have received! As they are bound to pray continually for their benefactors, this is very possible.<sup>2</sup>

Then St. Teresa goes back to her principal object, the duty of praying with the utmost diligence and efficacy for the defenders of the Church. The greater number of these men, she says, are taken from the Religious Orders, and the nuns are to pray that our Lord may advance them daily in the perfection which belongs to so holy a vocation. Then she speaks beautifully of the great needs of these men, who have to mingle with the world for the sake of God, who have occasion to practise virtues of every kind, who are watched with such unpardoning vigilance by the men among whom they labour. The religious of St. Joseph's are to pray continually for two things—one, that there may be a great many religious men with the qualities necessary for the defence of the Church, and that God will make fit those who are not yet fit for this service, and the other, that when they are in the field of battle He will hold them up by His hand, that they may escape the numberless dangers which surround them in the world, "and shut their ears to the songs of those sirens who are to be met with in that perilous sea." For this purpose the nuns are never to think it foolish to pray for others rather than for themselves. "What does it matter if I remain in Purgatory to the Day of Judgment, if by my prayers I save a

<sup>2</sup> *Way of Perfection*, cc. i. ii. iii.

single soul, especially if by labouring for the spiritual advancement of many, I procure greater glory to my God?" This passage suggests a return on herself, as it were, acknowledging her own misery, but imploring God to hear the prayers of her children, and to another beautiful passage in which she entreats the Eternal Father to spare His Son the outrages which He suffers, at the hands of the heretics, in the Blessed Sacrament.

Teresa then goes on to speak of the faithful observance of the rule. She tells them she will dwell particularly on three points—the love they should have for one another, their detachment from all creatures, and the practice of true humility. On the first she speaks against particular friendships, as they are called, which destroy the perfect union of the whole community. The heart is never to be given to any one, in however good a manner, so as to become a slave, and for this purpose it is well to be particular as to the observance of the rule not to be together except at stated times. She says this is one reason why she has arranged that each religious shall work in her own cell. There is also some danger of the commencement of a foolish attachment, if the confessor is frivolous and encourages too much talk, and for this reason, among others, she has provided her children with plentiful freedom of communicating with other priests and learned men beside the ordinary confessor. She says that this arrangement, of which she begs the Prioress to take great care, was considered very diligently by the Bishop of Avila, under whom St. Joseph's was placed, and that

he assembled a number of learned and holy men, who came to the conclusion that one of the greatest securities for the spiritual good of the convent was this provision of the liberty of the nuns to confer with other confessors. No confessor and no representative of the ecclesiastical Superior was to have the liberty to enter the convent ; their office was to be confined to watching over recollection and observance, and the advancement of the religious in virtue, interior and exterior.<sup>3</sup>

Then follow some chapters on true spiritual love, and on the manner in which it kindles in the soul an insatiable fire of desire for the spiritual good of others, and of the means by which this desire may be made efficacious. Teresa then passes to the subject of detachment. She enlarges on the blessedness of the religious vocation for the acquirement of this necessary condition of perfection, and says, very forcibly and earnestly, that she desires that any one who cannot put up with the detachment from the world which is insisted on in her convent will depart from it. A religious person, she says, who desires to see her family for her own consolation is imperfect, her soul is sick, she has need of the physician. The visits which are permitted are for the consolation of others, not for that of the nuns. She makes some curious remarks on this point of the love of relatives. She is thinking, apparently, of cases in which certain members of communities received little comforts for themselves from their relations. This she declares an abuse from which the religious of St. Joseph's are

<sup>3</sup> Cc. iv. v. vi.

delivered by the practice of perfect poverty and community of everything. It is well known that this abuse has not always been absent, even in some of the most regular of the Orders. She also declares that she has herself received little help from her family, though there was so much love between them. But she makes an exception, it seems, in favour of very near relations, parents, brothers, and sisters. These can be consoled without any injury being done to the spirit of detachment. She says also that it is very well, in order to be more free from this danger, to become religious at a distance from home.<sup>4</sup>

After speaking on detachment from relations, Teresa goes on to the subject of detachment from self by mortification. To think that all is done when the door has been closed against distractions from without, is like going to sleep in security against thieves, when the house has been barred against thieves, but when they are already inside. Nothing is safe without mortification and humility, on which true mortification is founded. She begins with the mortification of the body. It might be thought that this was sufficiently provided for by the rule of Mount Carmel, but it is not so. St. Teresa here brings in, we may suppose, her experience of other houses. "Truly one would say that some of those in convents have come there for no other purpose than to endeavour not to die, so much pains do they take to prolong their life in every way in their power. In this convent of ours, indeed, it would not be easy

<sup>4</sup> C. vii.

to do this actually, but I should wish that we might not even have the desire to do it. They have come there, not to treat themselves delicately, in order to serve our Lord, but to die for our Lord." She speaks of this over-care as a snare of the evil one. "People take so much care of their health in order to be able to keep the rule, that the rule is never kept, and they die without ever having completely kept it for a single month, or a single day." This is a thoroughly Teresian sentence—for St. Teresa has an arch kind of fun about her in many parts of her works. As for there being any fear of lack of discretion as to austerities, the confessors take care of that well enough.

Then she goes on to speak of the delusions of the religious who begin for a day or two some immoderate mortification, and then get such a fear of penance altogether, that they cannot do what the rule prescribes. She says they don't keep silence, which would do them no harm, and they leave off going to choir, which again would not hurt them, because of a headache. Then they invent penances out of their own head, which prevent them from doing those which are of obligation. She adds, what reminds us of that which Father de Padraños said to herself, that our Lord allows some of the religious who are so discreet about penances to suffer illness instead. She is also hard upon the habit of complaining of little sufferings and ills. These ills are sometimes imaginary. At all events they should be borne in silence, though it would be a greater fault not to speak when there is real necessity than to take little

comforts needlessly. In great sufferings, patience is to be shown. She has some old acquaintances in her mind, evidently, for she says—"Ah! what will be said of me if this is read outside these walls of St. Joseph!"<sup>5</sup>

Teresa then passes on to the subject of interior mortification. This is to be gained by the conquest of our own will and of the desires of nature, and by repressing with great care the interior movements, especially as regards anything like precedence. She answers the objection that God sometimes gives great favours to souls which are not so perfect in abnegation, by saying that He does this because He sees that His favours will lead those souls to this virtue. "God preserve us," she says, "from those who wish to ally the interests of their own honour with His service!" Honour is lost when it is sought—especially in the matter of charges and of authority: all worldly matters of honour and the like are to be trampled under foot, all our glory is to be in sharing the humiliations of Jesus Christ, and no one is fit for Carmel who cannot do this. She has a chapter on the care to be taken in admitting no one who has not the qualities of which she had been speaking. She enlarges also on the benefit of never making excuses for ourselves.<sup>6</sup>

In the seventeenth chapter of the work, St. Teresa at length begins to speak on the subject of contemplation. This was the main object of the religious in asking her to write the book of which we are speaking. But she turns at once, before going on,

<sup>5</sup> C. xii.<sup>6</sup> Cc. xiii. xiv.

to the necessity of solid virtues. Then comes a good deal about the perfect humility of a soul which gives itself entirely to God. If the nuns are not prepared for that, they may remain all their life with their ordinary mental prayer, they cannot hope for contemplation. Even mental prayer, if well made, must repose on the same foundation. It is true, she repeats, that our Lord sometimes leads souls to more perfect union with Himself by this way. "Though He sees them entirely given up to dissipation, He will not have it that they do not come back to Him because He leaves anything undone for them ; so He grants them spiritual delights and favours which begin to excite holy desires in them." Sometimes, though rarely, He places them in a kind of contemplation, which lasts a short time, and which is given them to prove whether these favours will lead them to dispose themselves for longer visits of His. Not all souls are fit for contemplation. Being so great a gift of God, those who have it must humble themselves continually, and those who have it not must be content to serve God safely without it. It cannot be expected that all the nuns in a convent should have this gift. She speaks of a person known to her, advanced in age, of great virtue, and a great servant of God, who passes several hours every day for many years in vocal prayer. She finds it impossible, she says, to pray mentally in the ordinary sense of meditation. She can only say her vocal prayers slowly, dwelling on the words. A great number of good persons are like her, and their way of serving God is very safe, for they are at least free

from the danger of the delusions which may sometimes occur in the consolations of mental prayer. There is always safety in humility, mortification, detachment, and the other virtues. St. Martha, she says, was a Saint, but it is nowhere said that she was a contemplative. If she had been absorbed like her sister in amorous contemplation, there would have been no one to provide for the entertainment of our Lord. Since it is true, she adds, that we can always serve the Divine Guest Who comes to us to lodge, to feed, to rest, whether by contemplation, or vocal prayer, or serving the sick, or by the lowest offices in the house, what does it matter to us to do it in one way rather than another? She does not mean that they are not to do all that lies in their power to fit themselves for the gift of contemplation, but that they are to be content to leave it in the hands of God, sure that what He wills is the best for them.<sup>7</sup>

St. Teresa next insists on the truth that those whom God leads by the way of contemplation have more to suffer, in the continual fidelity of their service to Him, than others. They must be ever ready for any sacrifices which He may require of them, ever faithful in the practice of the most arduous virtues. She speaks especially of the faithful practice of obedience. Passing to the subject of mental prayer, properly so called, she says that there are excellent books provided for the use of those who are called to serve God in this practice, and she does not intend to offer any fresh instructions to them. The way of

<sup>7</sup> Cc. xvii. xviii.



mental prayer is sure and full of peace, and it will lead them in time to the eternal light. She speaks for those who cannot meditate in this way. Their minds are so volatile and inconstant that they cannot fix on anything, and they are much to be pitied. They are like people who have an immense thirst and who set out for a fountain which they see afar off, and have to fight with enemies at the outset, the middle, and the end of their march. The first perhaps they conquer, but the second succeed in barring the way. Perhaps they are within but a few steps of the living water, of which our Lord spoke to the Samaritan woman, when they fail for want of perseverance. Then she goes off in one of those beautiful digressions—if so they can be called in a writer like St. Teresa, who never binds herself not to digress, and whose wanderings from her direct path are often the most valuable parts of the whole work in which they occur—to compare the water of which our Lord spoke with the union with God which is to be enjoyed in prayer. He said that he that drank of that water should never thirst, but yet though this is true of the thirst of the things of this world, it is true also that the water of Divine love kindles a most ardent thirst for the things of the future.

She dwells at length on the three qualities of water, to refresh, to purify, and to satisfy thirst, and compares the love of God as produced by this union with each. Then follows a passage in which she unveils her own experience of the ineffable desire of God, which makes the soul suffer almost a death here below, from its absence from Him. Although there

are so many different ways by which souls are led on by God, He does not forbid any to desire to walk along this of contemplation. On the contrary, He seems to invite all to come to Him thus. We must resolve never to abandon the enterprise—the first resolution we must make must be never to give it up. Even if we have to break it off, at all events we shall have gained, as long as we have practised contemplation. It is impossible but that it must do us great good.<sup>8</sup>

This gives St. Teresa occasion to insist upon the rule which her religious should follow in all their conversation with others. A soul athirst for God will desire to kindle the same thirst in others, and in all our conversations we must ever aim at the good of souls. It is no time for child's play, she says, and the virtuous friendships of the world are but child's play. We may speak of affection to our own near kindred, when we wish to get them to listen to some wholesome truth, but otherwise it is loss of time. Religious persons are bound to speak only of God, and they must not shrink from or hide their true character. It is not well to say to ourselves that we do not wish them to think us good, for we are members of a community, and all the good or the bad that is observed in us will fall upon it. We must speak our own language. If they will learn it, well and good—if they will not, they will soon leave us alone.<sup>9</sup>

After repeating what she has already said about the necessity of a firm resolution of perseverance in

<sup>8</sup> Cc. xix. xx. xxi.

<sup>9</sup> C. xxi.

those who set themselves to the practice of prayer, Teresa catches, as it were, at a common objection—that the way of prayer is full of dangers, that such a one has been deluded, and the like—as was said to herself, when the case of Magdalene of the Cross was quoted against her—that nuns should limit themselves to the work which is usually allotted to their sex, and be content for prayer with the *Pater* and *Ave*. “Yes,” she says, “the *Pater* and *Ave* are enough,” the prayers that are taught us by the mouth of our Lord are the best. If our feebleness was not so great, and our devotion so cold, we should have no need of other prayers. And therefore she will take the *Pater* as the foundation of her teaching, and build upon it her simple rules and suggestions for prayer. This sentence is in a way the key to a great part of the remainder of the book of which we are speaking. Its later chapters contain St. Teresa’s beautiful thoughts on the *Pater noster*, which she so shapes and develops as to make them instructions on prayer in general. It is true that we have, as everywhere in her writings, a number of most valuable digressions, and to any one who would try her by the strict rules of literary composition, she may seem to wander about. But the digressions of St. Teresa are worth more than the direct and formal reasonings and discourse of others, and there is, besides, always a clear connection in what she says with her main subject.

She begins by saying that she writes for those who have not the power of recollecting themselves sufficiently for ordinary meditation on a mystery.

She does not question whether individuals are to cultivate most mental or vocal prayer—she leaves that aside. The truth is that both kinds of prayer are in a true sense necessary. Religious persons must ally the one with the other. The dangers of which people speak as to prayer is not in prayer itself—it is in the neglect of humility and the other great virtues. She speaks strongly of the blindness of the world. The world takes no account of the thousands and thousands of men who, neglecting prayer altogether, fall into heresy and the worst excesses of immorality ; but if, what happens but rarely, the tempter manages to seduce and delude a single soul that is given to prayer, a great deal is made of the matter, for the purpose of discrediting prayer and frightening people away from the practice of prayer and the practice of virtue alike. We can see that she has not forgotten the good folk who were so loud in decrying her own prayer, on account of the delusions of others. She exhorts her children to set aside all vain fears on the subject, and to trust themselves to the good providence of God in this matter.<sup>10</sup>

When people say mental prayer is not necessary, what do they mean? They cannot mean that we are not to attend to what we are about, to God to Whom we are speaking, to the words with which we address Him. In any case we cannot approach God without respect, and this implies the kind of mental attention of which she is speaking. She conjures her children to remember that they can never show

<sup>10</sup> C. xxii.

God enough of respect and love when they are speaking to Him. They can never study too much to know all about Him Who has chosen them for His spouses. She goes on to give three reasons for the determination of which she has already spoken more than once, of perseverance in prayer. In the first place, she says, as God has been so liberal in His favours to us, we cannot do less than give Him with an entire and full will the time which we have determined to pass with Him in prayer, especially as it is our own interest to act in that way, and we shall gain therefrom such great advantages. In the second place, our resolution will make it much less easy for the tempter to trouble us in the time of our prayer, for he knows that when he assails strong and resolute souls he usually loses more than he gains. The third reason is that we fight with much more resolution when we have made up our mind on no account to turn our back on our enemy. Then, as to recollection, when we say the words of our *Pater* and *Ave*, it must not be said of us that we do not understand the words which we use. She leaves it to the learned to settle the question of the different kinds of attention in prayer, when persons do not understand the language in which they pray—but for her and her nuns, they must not content themselves with unintelligent prayer.

“When I recite the *Credo*,” she says, “I ought, I think, to know what I believe, and in the same way, when I say, ‘Our Father,’ love requires of me that I know Who the Father is, and also Who the Master Who teaches me the prayer is.” The first lesson

which our Lord has taught us about prayer is that of retirement and solitude at the time of prayer. But here St. Teresa is careful, even in writing for her Carmelites of St. Joseph, not to be too severe on distractions, which are not always voluntary. There are some, she says, who, whatever the efforts they make, cannot overcome their distractions. The displeasure which they feel under such trials is a mark that they are not in fault, and it is better for them not to wear themselves out in vain efforts. Let them pray as best they can, or let them leave prayer for the time and spend it in acts of other virtues. "As for us," she says, "let us try to be alone with God when we pray. Almighty God speaks to our heart, though we hear Him not, whenever we pray to Him in the bottom of our hearts." She insists on attention in vocal prayer. "It may be called mental, if you like," she says. "I cannot separate this kind of mental prayer from vocal prayer when well made. It is a mistake to suppose that the fruit of such vocal prayer is little. God can raise the soul to a perfect contemplation, while it is reciting the *Pater* in the bottom of the heart. This great God shows that He hears the soul which is speaking to Him, and then He condescends to speak to it, suspending its intelligence, arresting its thoughts, making the words die away on the lips, so that it can utter nothing without great effort. The soul knows that the Divine Master is instructing it, without making the sound of His voice heard, holding its powers in suspense, because their activity might be hurtful rather than helpful at such a time. Each one of the powers of

the soul enjoys its Divine object, in a manner which it cannot understand. The soul feels itself on fire with love without knowing how it loves. It knows that it possesses Him Whom it loves, but how it possesses it knows not. All that it can do is to know that the understanding cannot conceive nor the heart desire a good so great as that in the fulness of which it is engulfed. The will embraces this good without knowing how it does this, the light that is given to it is enough to make it judge that all the labours of the world would not be enough to merit it or to purchase it."

This shows us the difference between mental prayer and contemplation. In mental prayer and in vocal prayer, which is to be accompanied by mental, in the sense already explained, we can do something of ourselves, with the assistance of God. But in contemplation we can do nothing; it is altogether the work of God, above our nature. She says she has spoken more on this subject in the book of her Life, and that some of her nuns would do well to read that book. But she will not say more of contemplation here.<sup>11</sup>

The next chapter contains some very definite instructions as to the method of prayer which St. Teresa recommends. The nuns are told to examine their conscience before they begin their prayer, then to recite the *Confiteor*, and make the sign of the Cross. The next thing she says is, as you are alone, to seek to find a companion. Who can be better than the Divine Master Who has taught you the prayer you

<sup>11</sup> Cc. xxiii.—xxvi.

are about to say? So our Lord is to be represented as at their side, and they are to consider with what love and humility He condescends to give them instruction. She recommends this habit of the presence of our Lord as the course for those who cannot control their thoughts or imaginations otherwise. But they are not to make long reasonings or discourse about our Lord. They are merely to look at Him. He is always looking at them, notwithstanding their unworthiness. He adapts Himself to their temper and condition of mind. If they are in joy, they are to consider Him as risen from the dead; if they are in sadness and tribulation, they are to consider Him as He was in the Garden, or as bound to the pillar, or as carrying the heavy burthen of His Cross. "He will turn upon you His eyes full of tears, but what a beauty in that look—what tender compassion. He will forget His own sorrows to console yours, and this only because you go to seek for consolation with Him, and turn your head to Him to look on Him."

Then they are to speak to Him in the simple unstudied words which their devotion will suggest. They are to offer to Him their resolution to suffer everything that may happen to them, for the sake of imitating Him in something at least. They are to join themselves to Him, and seek to share the ill-treatment which He receives from the Jews and others. The excess of our Lord's sufferings will make them think lightly of anything they may have themselves to suffer. She reminds them that the souls which cannot conquer themselves in little



things will never be able to follow our Saviour on Mount Calvary. They are recommended to have a picture of our Lord, such as suits their devotion, always before their eyes. It is also useful to read books of meditation which will suggest thoughts conducive to recollection.<sup>11</sup>

The remaining chapters of the *Way of Perfection* are occupied with St. Teresa's thoughts on the several petitions of the *Pater noster*, applied, as has been said, to the doctrine of prayer. When she comes to the words, "Who art in Heaven," she explains the prayer of recollection, which is very like that which she herself practised after she had met with the book of the Franciscan friar already mentioned above. The soul collects all her powers and retires with them into herself with her God. She is alone with her Saviour, and can think of His Passion and offer Him to God the Father, even without the effort of seeking Him in the Garden, on Mount Calvary, or as bound to the pillar. She speaks very highly of the benefits of this kind of prayer. The soul, she says, feels that it has acquired a sort of empire over itself, its faculties, and senses, and can govern them as it wills. It regards all the things of the world as nothing. There are difficulties, at the beginning. Nature cries out. The senses and the body rebel. But the reward of perseverance is great. The faculties are like bees which have come home to the hive and are at work in making honey within. It is a way of prayer by which great advances are rapidly made. St. Teresa recommends the following practice for the acquire-

<sup>11</sup> C. xxvii.

ment of this recollection. We are to imagine that there is within us a magnificent palace, all of gold and precious stones, worthy of the great King Who dwells therein, and that we ourselves have some part in giving to Him this magnificent home. For this palace is our soul, and when it is pure, the beauty of the most superb building is as nothing in comparison. The virtues are diamonds which form His robe, and the greater are the virtues the more splendid do the diamonds show. The King of kings is in this palace. He deigns to be your Father, and He sits on a throne of inestimable price, which is your heart. She apologizes for this image of the palace, which she says may be useful at least to poor women like herself. "Would to God that women were the only people who forgot what the soul contains within it!"<sup>12</sup>

In the next chapter St. Teresa begins to speak of the prayer of quiet, although she seems at first to say that she will leave it, having already spoken of it in the book of her Life. She mentions a person whom she knew, who had no other kind of prayer but that of vocal prayer, and yet was raised by God to a very high contemplation. She used to recite some *Paters* and *Aves*, thinking of the mysteries in which our Lord had shed His Blood, and by the aid of this prayer she used to remain many hours together in union with our Divine Saviour.<sup>13</sup> But she goes on in the chapter which follows to give a very full account of the prayer of quiet. This prayer, she says, is supernatural, and beyond all our industries and efforts. It is the beginning of the supernatural

<sup>12</sup> C. xxix.<sup>13</sup> C. xxx.

state, in which God grants us the full satisfaction of our desires for union with Him. It is a profound peace, a perfect repose of all the faculties, into which our Lord makes the soul enter by His presence with it, as in the case of the holy Simeon. He knew by Divine teaching Who the Infant was Whom he held in his arms, and the soul feels without knowing how, that she is very close to her God. The faculties—interior and exterior—are suspended, and the person would gladly avoid even the least movement of the body. The faculties enjoy their Divine object in a profound peace, which the soul would gladly never leave. The understanding and memory are still free to think of God, Who has allowed them so close an approach to Himself; but the will is captive and bound in a sweet slavery, its only pain being the thought that its bondage is to come to an end. The understanding and memory would like to occupy themselves on nothing else but their object, and the persons who have this kind of prayer are afraid of the least movement, lest the peace enjoyed therein should be disturbed. They spend an hour in saying the *Pater* once. They are in the palace, and see that the King is beginning to put them in possession of the Kingdom.<sup>14</sup>

God, she says, often accompanies this kind of prayer by a favour difficult to understand save by those who have had experience of it. The prayer seems to continue for as much as a day, or even two days, during which the soul enjoys the happiness of which she has spoken. The will is so chained to

<sup>14</sup> C. xxxii.

God that, it seems, if such persons give themselves to any exterior occupation, that the principal part of the whole, that is the will, is not there, being united to God, while the memory and understanding are free, more active, more powerful than ever, though only for the service of God. For the things of the world then seem to be smitten with impotence and nullity. Thus they are able to join the active and contemplative lives—to serve our Lord with Mary and Martha at the same time.<sup>15</sup>

St. Teresa gives some advice for persons who are raised to this kind of prayer, knowing, as she says, that several of the nuns for whom she is writing have received that favour. The first is what has been already mentioned in her experience. People who have this gift are inclined to think that they can keep it or lose it, and so are afraid of moving or breathing lest it should depart. This is, she says, an excess of simplicity. As we cannot make the day come, nor prevent the night from taking its place, so in like manner we can neither obtain for ourselves so great a benefit nor retain it a moment longer than the time fixed by our Lord. All that we can do to retain it, is to understand that it is quite independent of our will, and that we are altogether unworthy of it, giving great thanks for it, and, like the publican, not daring to lift up our eyes to heaven. Another piece of advice is that the Sisters are not to be surprised if, when this kind of prayer is allowed to them, they are unable to make use of their understanding and their memory. The

<sup>15</sup> C. xxxii.

understanding is sometimes quite troubled and stupefied, while the will is entranced and in this wonderful peace. But perhaps, says St. Teresa, her own mind is the only one which is made after this fashion. She finds it well on such occasions to leave the understanding alone, without making efforts to recall it from its wanderings. In contemplation the understanding is no longer subject to any trouble, the three powers of the soul remain entirely united to their Divine object, "because He Who created them suspends their natural action, and overwhelms them with a pleasure which holds them all at once in ravishment, without their knowing or being able to comprehend how."

She ends the subject by saying that in this prayer of quietude the petition for the coming of the Kingdom of God here below seems to be heard. It is here that she makes again the earnest remark that they must be careful to recite the *Pater* with great attention. Those who have reached this stage in the favours of God are prepared by Him for still greater, and if they are faithful, will make admirable progress in perfection. But if God sees that they turn their thoughts and affections to things below, He will not let them know the secrets and treasures of His Kingdom and will give them only rarely the favours which they have once tasted. It is for this reason, she thinks, that of those who have reached this stage few go beyond it, and advance to still higher gifts. They do not correspond by their fidelity to so great graces. They withdraw their will from the hands of God, to treat it as their own, and attach it to lower

things. God goes then in search of souls who will love Him truly, to enrich them with His great favours. Then follows a remarkable statement. She says there are persons—"and I have been of the number"—whose heart our Lord softens, whom He favours with holy inspirations, whom He enlightens on the nothingness of the things of this world, and to whom He gives His Kingdom, by raising them to this prayer of quiet, and who nevertheless are deaf to His voice. And the reason is that they make too much of a point of saying hastily, and as if to accomplish a task, a number of vocal prayers which they have set themselves to say every day. In vain does our Lord place His Kingdom in their hands, they will not take it, imagining that it is better to recite their vocal prayers, and so turning their attention away from the signal favour which their Divine Master vouchsafes to grant them.<sup>16</sup>

Speaking of the petition of the *Pater*, "Thy will be done," St. Teresa takes occasion to apply to it the gift of perfect contemplation. When the gift of our will is perfect and absolute, it has such an empire over the Heart of the Almighty Himself, that He determines to make Himself one with our lowness, to transform us into Himself, and so unite the Creator to the creature. The more our tender Father sees by our works that this gift of our will is sincere and absolute, the more does He draw us near to Himself, the more does He lift our soul above creatures, above itself, in order to make it capable of receiving the greatest favours. He sets so high a value on this

<sup>16</sup> C. xxxii.

proof of our love, that He does not cease to recompense us even in this life. His munificence overwhelms us with so many gifts that we know not what more to ask of Him, and nevertheless He goes on giving to us and is never weary of giving. Thus, He does not content Himself with that intimate union by which He has made us one thing with Himself. This God of love begins to take His delights in our soul, to open to it His secrets, to rejoice in its knowledge of His happiness, and that it has, although through veils, a first glimpse of that felicity which He reserves for it in the future world. He goes still further, for He makes it lose the use of its exterior senses, in order that it may be free from all chains, and occupy itself entirely with its God. This is what is called rapture.<sup>17</sup>

Her meditation on the words, "Give us this day our daily bread," is fully as beautiful as the last. She begins by pointing out the great difficulty of inducing even good people to carry out the sacrifice of their will which they have just made to God. "Our good Master knowing, on the one hand, what He had given to God in our name, and how much it behoved us that it should be given, and, on the other hand, the difficulty we should have to resolve ourselves thereto, on account of our weakness and our inclination to low and passing things, and seeing besides that on account of our lack of courage and of love it was necessary that the example of a love such as His own should be under our eyes to excite our love, not once only, but every day—pressed by so many

<sup>17</sup> C. xxxiii.

motives, He resolved in His infinite and inexhaustible charity to remain with us upon this earth. But, as this was a thing of so great weight and importance, He desired that it should be His Father Himself Who granted it." Then St. Teresa goes on, as often in this book, to speak of the immense injuries and humiliations to which our Lord has exposed Himself in this Blessed Sacrament.<sup>18</sup>

The next chapter, on the fruits of Holy Communion, contains a passage which is evidently drawn by St. Teresa from her own experience. She is speaking of the effects of the Blessed Sacrament even on the body. "I know a person who, besides having great infirmities, often experienced great pains when she went to communicate, and who had no sooner received the Bread of Life, than she felt all her ills vanish as if they had been taken away from her by a hand. This happened to her ordinarily, and it was more striking because her pains were manifest and, in my judgment, of such a nature as that it would have been impossible for her to feign them. But the marvels wrought by this Sacred Bread on those who receive It worthily are so notorious that I abstain from mentioning a great many others which concern this person—it would be easy for me to relate them, seeing that I was informed of all that happened to her, and that I know that there was no shadow of falsehood about them. In truth, God had given her so lively a faith that when she heard some people say that they would like to have lived in the days when Jesus Christ, our

<sup>18</sup> C. xxxiv.



sovereign Good, was in the world, she would laugh in herself, because this adorable Saviour is as really in the midst of us in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar as He was when in the midst of men, and she could not understand what more people could desire. I know also of this person that for many years, being as yet not very perfect, she used to revive her faith so keenly at the moment of Communion, that she used to see our Saviour as present as if she had seen Him enter into her with the eyes of the body. Sure of possessing her God in the poor abode of her heart, she detached herself, as far as was in her, from all external things, in order to shut herself up with Him in this interior dwelling. She strove to collect all her senses, to make them know, in some sort, the ineffable Good which she possessed, or to speak better, that her soul might without obstacle apply itself to the knowledge of Him. She considered herself as being at the feet of Jesus Christ her Saviour, and with Magdalene she watered them with tears as if she had been seeing Him in the house of the Pharisee. When sensible devotion failed her, she was satisfied with her faith which told her that He was there indeed. And in truth, who, without blinding himself and shutting his eyes voluntarily to the light of faith, can doubt that God is veritably within us at that time? This is not a simple representation, as when, by the aid of the imagination, we represent to ourselves Jesus Christ on the Cross, or in some mystery of the Passion. It is the reality, Jesus Christ Himself actually present, so that it is no longer necessary to go and seek Him elsewhere,

or at a distance from us. He is within us, and He remains there until the accidents of bread are consumed. We are certain of His presence, let us profit by a time so precious to hold ourselves close to His Divine Person.”<sup>19</sup>

The whole chapter of which we are speaking, on Holy Communion, is most beautiful, and most characteristic of St. Teresa. She urges her Sisters to draw the greatest possible profit from the hour after Communion. If obedience calls them away, they are to leave their soul with our Lord. It is then that He delights to instruct us ; we are to sit at His feet, and kiss them in thankfulness. She says we are then to ask of Him the graces which at other times we beg for before one of His pictures ; but we are not to leave Him to go to His picture. When our Lord withdraws Himself from us, then is the time to have recourse to the picture, which consoles us under the desolation which follows. She would have pictures of our Lord, she says, everywhere, and speaks strongly about the misery of the heretics who have deprived themselves of this consolation, and of so many others. The next chapter is about spiritual communion, of which she would have her nuns make diligent and constant practice, as a very important means of grace. Here again she breaks out into a glowing passage about the profanations of the Blessed Sacrament by the heretics.<sup>20</sup>

In the next chapter Teresa passes on to the petition, “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.” She remarks that

<sup>19</sup> C. xxxv.<sup>20</sup> C. xxxvi.

our Lord does not bid us say, "As we will forgive," but, "As we forgive." He supposes the pardon to be already complete. She speaks vigorously, in her bright way, about the miserable points of honour which remain, even in spiritual persons and in the communities dedicated to God, and which cause so many little offences and wounds which have to be forgiven. She says our Lord might have put the motive for pardon very differently. He might have said, "Forgive us, for our many prayers or fastings, or for our having abandoned the world, or for the love which we bear Thee, which is such as to make us ready to die for Thee. But He says, 'Forgive us, for we forgive.' This is perhaps the reason—seeing how much we are attached to this miserable worldly honour, which is the principal source of all resentments, and that nothing costs us so much as the pardoning those who wound us, our Divine Master thought that He could offer nothing on our part more agreeable to His Father than that honour, and so He makes the sacrifice of it in our name."<sup>21</sup>

She then speaks of the true servants of God, who are raised to a high state of union with Him. She says they love crosses and insults with the truest love, and esteem them as gold and precious stones. They have no good opinion of themselves, and so they are glad that their sins should be known. They have no pride of high birth or race, which they only value if it enables them to serve God more efficiently. They are glad to undeceive persons who think well of them. They are so forgetful of themselves in their humility

<sup>21</sup> C. xxxvii.

and desire to serve God, that they are quite insensible to ill-treatment. As for the resolution to suffer contempt and injuries, notwithstanding the pain they may cause, which is the first step, she thinks that those who have the prayer of union will easily acquire this. She thinks it impossible that a soul, who has drawn so near to the source of infinite mercy, can find any difficulty in pardoning on the spot, and in giving a true affection to the person who has offended him. Such a soul rejoices with incredible joy at having occasions of giving something of this kind to God, Who has been so good to it. And here she makes her famous declaration, that she has known many persons to whom God has given supernatural gifts, whether of the prayer of union or of perfect contemplation, and she has noted in them other defects and imperfections, but never has she seen them fail the least in the world in this point of the forgiveness of injuries. And she does not think that it could be so if these graces came truly from God.<sup>22</sup>

Passing on to the last petitions of the *Pater*, St. Teresa says that in these our Lord begins to show the effects of the Divine gifts which have been already asked for, when they proceed truly from Him. She speaks of the purpose which our Lord may have had in making the several petitions of His prayer so general. It may have been because it was to be used by all, and that all might find in it what corresponds to their own needs. Contemplatives may ask the heavenly gifts of which she has been speaking, and

<sup>22</sup> C. xxxvii.

the ordinary Christian may ask the daily bread necessary for the body. But observe, she says, as for giving our will to God, and as for the pardon of injuries, these are two obligations which bind all without distinction. Then she returns to the persons for whom she is more specially engaged in interpreting the prayer. She says they are all crowned with the favours of which she has been speaking, and our Lord meanwhile discovers the dangers which may beset them, and warns them against these in the last petitions. In the first place we ought to form a great idea of the importance of these last prayers, since our Lord has put them into our mouths. We do not certainly ask to be delivered from sufferings, temptations, persecutions, conflicts. Such trials are the most certain proofs to contemplative souls that their graces come from God. Far therefore from fearing them, they desire them, ask for them, love them, just as good soldiers love fighting for their King. They are not afraid of open enemies that they can see, but there are many enemies more redoubtable than these—who transfigure themselves into angels of light, and who only reveal themselves after they have attacked them with success.

She then proceeds to speak of some of the hidden dangers from which the servants of God may pray to be defended. She begins by denying—with reference, perhaps, to what had taken place in her own case, when so much trouble was caused by suspicions that she might be deluded in her prayer—that the only evil which the devils can do us is the persuading us that the pleasurable feelings in prayer which they

excite in us come truly from God. In St. Teresa's opinion, this is one of the least harms they can cause us. For many souls will be led to make great advances in their service of God, by thinking that He is favouring them, even when He is not. There is no danger for those who are sincerely humble, who acknowledge their own unworthiness, and who do not seek extraordinary graces. The danger lies in persons thinking they have virtues which they have not, or again, in forgetting that the virtues which we may have are only lent us by God, and that He can take them away in a moment if He so wills. We are not to think we have any virtues till we have practised them for a long time. Thus people think they desire suffering, and all at once they fall into impatience at the first word which annoys them. They think they love poverty, and they are put out, the first moment that they really experience want of any necessary thing. She speaks in the same way of false humilities, which the devil suggests to keep people away from Communion or from prayer.

She gives the test of true humility. True humility, however great it may be, never causes disquiet in the soul, or troubles, or upsets it—it is accompanied by pleasure, peace, repose. No doubt the soul sees plainly that it has deserved Hell, and is afflicted thereat, it thinks that the whole world ought to abhor it; it hardly dares to lift up its eyes to Heaven to ask for mercy; yet it finds so much sweetness and happiness at the bottom of this pain, that it would not be an instant without it. True humility does not cause trouble or anguish, it dilates the heart, and

makes it more fit to work for God. In the same way Satan sometimes inspires persons to do extravagant penances and austerities, in order to persuade them that they are more penitent than others, and that they are doing something considerable for God. These persons should disclose their desires in this kind to their confessor or Superior. Presumptuous confidence is another snare of the devil to such persons. They think they have seen enough of the nothingness of this world, and that nothing could ever induce them to return to the follies of their past life. This security sometimes leads to the most dangerous falls, and persons tempted to think themselves secure, on account of the gifts which they receive in prayer, should be careful to open themselves as to all these matters to their spiritual guides. She comes back at the end of her treatment of this subject to what she has already said about the foolish judgments of the world. "From the way people talk," she says, "one might think that the only persons whom the devil tempts are those who give themselves to prayer. To see one of these men, who have come to a high perfection, fall, astonishes the world more than the sight of a hundred thousand slaves of the devil manifestly misled, plunged in public sins, and as to whose state there can be no doubt, since it is clear a thousand leagues off that they are under the empire of Satan. This delusion serves the devil very well, for it serves to discourage the practice of prayer; and one man who arrives at perfection snatches from Hell a multitude of others."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Cc. xxxviii.—xl.

St. Teresa ends her consideration on this petition of the *Pater* by two chapters on the love and fear of God, the two virtues which furnish us with the means of living in this scene of danger, with security. She exhorts her Sisters to have a great confidence in God, Who has kindled in their hearts His Divine love. They are to be on their guard against vain fears on this subject, for the devil gains thereby in two ways, by making some people abandon or avoid the exercise of prayer, for fear of delusion, and also by diminishing the number of persons who would give themselves entirely to God, if they firmly believed in the goodness with which He imparts Himself, even in this life, to sinners such as we are. "The view of the treasures which God communicates to us is a charm which draws many souls to His service." She knows many who have been thus led to give themselves to prayer. She draws a forcible contrast between the ends of those who have the love of God and those who have it not.<sup>24</sup>

Then she speaks of the holy fear of God, which, she says, is not perfect at the beginning, except by a special favour of God, but which grows by time and makes the soul avoid sin, dangerous occasions, bad companionships, and show by other marks the treasure which it possesses. Such persons may be watched carefully, they never walk on without vigilance—they fear mortal sins like fire, and nothing on earth will induce them to commit venial sins of deliberate purpose. She exhorts her children to labour hard for this purity of conscience, and then

<sup>24</sup> C. xli.



she explains the different sorts of venial sin, and what she means by the deliberation which is always to be avoided. In order to gain this holy fear, they are to keep constantly in mind the extreme gravity of an offence of God, and till they have this they must be always circumspect, avoid all occasions and companies which do not help them to more intimate union with God. They are to endeavour to conquer their own will in all they do, to say nothing that may not edify the hearers, and to avoid all conversations of which God is not the object. On the other hand, they are to be on their guard against excessive fear and anxiety, which often lead to scruples, and still oftener make persons useless in helping on others. They also lead them to judge others whom they see acting with holy liberty and holy joy. The Sisters are to be affable, amiable, condescending to all, and especially among themselves. They are not to think that God stands upon a number of little matters. They are to have a good intention, a firm will not to offend God, and then let their soul enjoy a holy liberty.<sup>25</sup>

We have now reached the last chapter of this wonderful work.<sup>26</sup> In this St. Teresa speaks of the last petition, "Deliver us from evil." She considers it as echoed in the words of our Lord before His Passion, that He had so much desire to eat that Pasch with His disciples. Thus she applies it to the desire for the end of this exile from God, which is found in the souls of those great servants of His whom He has highly favoured, and of which she

<sup>25</sup> C. xlii.<sup>26</sup> C. xliii.

had herself so much experience. "Even though our desire be not as yet quite perfect," she says, "let us not leave off addressing this petition to God with all the ardour we can command. But, that we may not deceive ourselves in our prayers, let us submit ourselves without reserve to that Divine will to which we have long ago made an entire abandonment of our own. And let us wait, with the confidence of children, for what He may please to give to us." She ends by a touching passage, in which she declares that she has been specially helped by our Lord to point out how His own Prayer contains the whole doctrine of the way of perfection, which she had wished to point out to her Sisters.

The book of the *Way of Perfection* was not the only work of the kind on which St. Teresa was occupied during the first years after the foundation of St. Joseph's. She was also engaged with the second copy of the manuscript of her *Life*. The first copy, as has been said, was sent to Fra Ybañez when she was at Toledo. Soon after this, and nearly at the beginning of her life at St. Joseph's, Fra Garcia de Toledo, who was her confessor at that time, urged her to write the second copy, and to carry on the connection to the point at which the *Life* now ends, that is, the foundation of the new convent. It seems to have been about the same time that she sought the advice of the Inquisitor Soto, and he gave her the same advice as to the continuation of her work as Fra Garcia had given. Thus it was during these years that the *Life*, as we now have it, was put together. We shall see how

desirous St. Teresa was to have the work submitted to the judgment of the famous Master Juan de Avila, called the Apostle of Andalusia, then at the very height of his fame, and, indeed, near the end of his long career of holy service to our Lord. This idea was in her mind at the time when the *Life* was finished for the first time, as is evident from the letter to Fra Ybañez, given at the end of a former chapter. St. Teresa never laid it aside, and, as will be seen, she was in the end satisfied by receiving the approval of that holy man, whose authority was at that time second to none in Spain.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### *First expansion of the Reform.*

IT has already been said that but few incidents remain recorded as having broke the calm tenour of the holy life of prayer and austerities which was led at the new convent for the first five years after its foundation. There are some lists of the nuns professed in various years given in the Spanish edition of St. Teresa's works, but these lists seem to be both imperfect and inaccurate, as they fix the dates of several of the professions at impossible times. It seems that the 21st of October, 1564, was the day which witnessed the first professions. On that day four of the novices made their solemn vows, in the order fixed by St. Teresa herself. Isabel of St. Paul, who had remained so long in the Convent of the

Incarnation, was the first ; after her came Ursula of the Saints, Antonia of the Holy Ghost, and Mary Baptist. In the lists just now mentioned we find it stated that Mary of St. Joseph and Mary of St. Jerome were professed in the same year, though another account puts the profession of Mary of the Cross, Mary of St. Jerome, and Isabel of St. Dominic in the following year, 1565. The only name of these which is new to us is the last, that of Isabella of St. Dominic. She was a young lady of Cardeñosa, in Old Castile, and was received at St. Joseph's by St. Teresa, who gave her the habit in 1563. Her parents were Don Juan de Montalvo and Maria de Vergas. Her career in the new Carmel was long and very brilliant. If we add to these names that of Teresa herself, and the three religious of the Incarnation already professed who came with her to the Convent of St. Joseph, we have already nearly the complete number for the little community. One or two more are incidentally mentioned, either in the list of professions, or by the historians of St. Teresa, but there is no reason for supposing the entries to have been numerous.

In the course of the fifth year after the foundation of St. Joseph's Convent at Avila, Teresa was visited by a holy religious of the Order of St. Francis, Fra Alonzo Maldonado, who had lately returned from the missions of his Order in India. She was always extremely fond of sermons and<sup>r</sup> exhortations, and she asked this good man to address the community at the close of his visit. He had spoken to Teresa and the others in conversation of the many thousands

of souls that were being lost in those distant countries for want of instruction, and when he came to address the community, he made them a pathetic exhortation on the power and necessity of penance for obtaining the favours of God in prayer. He left Teresa all on fire with love and zeal. She went, as was her wont, into one of the little hermitages which had been built in the garden and poured out her soul in prayer to our Lord, conjuring Him to grant her some means for saving or helping to save these poor creatures of His who were being lost in such numbers. As her prayers were the only means she had of assisting in the work of the apostolate, she begged Him to grant them some power and efficacy. She envied, she tells us, the happiness of those whose vocation it was to labour in this holy work, though at the risk of their own lives, and she was more moved by the history of the conversions which such persons wrought than even by the account of the martyrdoms of the saints. Of all the services that we can render to God, she says, there can be no one of which He makes more account than when we conquer souls to Him by the fervour of our prayers. This now became a great subject of prayer to her.

One night, while she was thus employed, our Lord appeared to her in His usual way, and with great tenderness consoled her. She was to wait a little while and she would see great things. She continued her prayers, wondering what these great things were to be of which our Lord had spoken. Six months passed away before she discovered what was meant.

At that time Philip II. was desirous of the reform of the Religious Orders in his great kingdom, and he had prevailed on the General of the Carmelite Order to come to Spain to visit his spiritual subjects for that purpose. The General was Father John Baptist de Rossi of Ravenna, a man of much holiness and wisdom. Like the other Generals of Orders, he habitually lived at Rome and seldom left Italy. He had never been in Spain. It appears that the reforms desired by the King had been attempted under his authority by some secular ecclesiastics, and that these attempts had failed. Philip did not do things of this sort by halves, and he had obtained from Pope Pius V. a Brief ordering Rossi to visit Spain. The Brief was dated February 24, 1566. Rossi arrived in Madrid in the middle of the year, and was received by the King with great distinction. He began his visitation and held a Chapter of the Order in Andalusia, at Seville, in the following September. He made very wise regulations for the perfection of observance, but the Carmelite Fathers of Andalusia were discontented, probably thinking him too severe, and they made complaints against him at the Court, on account of which Philip II. withdrew his favour from him. The General, however, went on his work in Castile, and held another Chapter of that province at Avila itself. He was thus brought into direct relations with St. Teresa.

We have unfortunately very few letters of St. Teresa belonging to any but the later years of her life, but one short note to the Bishop of Avila has survived, and it probably belongs to the time

when she was either expecting the arrival of the General, as it seems as if the letter from the Bishop of which she speaks was one of commendation to Rossi. The note makes several allusions of which we cannot quite see the full meaning, but it shows the kindly and affectionate terms on which she was with the Bishop and his sister and brother, both of whom are mentioned in the note—unless indeed the Doña Maria whose name occurs is Doña Maria de Avila, whose entrance into religion was related at the end of a former chapter.

LETTER IV.—*To Don Alvaro de Mendoza,  
Bishop of Avila.*

JESUS.

Avila, July 6, 1567.

All the Sisters of this convent vie with each other in presenting you with their very humble respects. For a year past we have been hoping you would come here to see Doña Maria. Don Bernardino promised it, and we were in the greatest joy. Our Lord has not permitted it. May it please His Divine Majesty that I may meet you in that abode where once united we shall never more be separated! The psalms were recited on the same day this year, and we shall continue to do so most willingly. May our Divine Master lead you ever with His hand, and grant you many years for His greater glory.

Father Garcia of Toledo is very well, thank God. He never ceases to give us proofs of the interest which he takes in us, and every day he becomes a greater servant of God. By command of the Provincial he has taken the charge of Master of Novices. A very humble charge, considering his rank and birth. But it was given to him because of his spirit and his virtue, so that he might serve the Order by

forming these souls on the model of his own. He accepted the charge with such deep humility as to give great edification. He does not want for work.

The unworthy servant of your lordship,

TERESA DE JESUS.

P.S.—Your lordship will be kind enough to do me the favour of sending off the Father as soon as possible. It may be that a letter from your lordship will be of use to us.

Teresa had not at first been without some alarm at the presence of the General in Spain. Her convent had been founded under the jurisdiction of the Bishop, and this might give Rossi some displeasure. Then again, she was herself a child of the Convent of the Incarnation, and what if the General were to endeavour to make her return to it? There were then in that house, she says, a hundred and fifty religious, and she could not have enjoyed the same peace and tranquillity there as at St. Joseph's, even if there were no other reasons for her desire to live and die there. However, she had always great courage, and she always dealt with her Superiors with perfect frankness and openness. So when the General was at Avila, she sent to beg his Paternity to come to visit her. She gave him a full account, not only of the whole history of the foundation of St. Joseph's, but also of her own life and the dealings of God with her. The General was charmed, as all were charmed to whom St. Teresa opened herself. Rossi was delighted also with the strict observance which he found in the convent, and he told her that he had no fault to find, that he would never order her to return to the Incarnation, and he encouraged and



consoled her in every possible way. There appears to have been always some doubt in Teresa's mind about the Brief by virtue of which she and her companions of the Incarnation had been placed under the jurisdiction of the Bishop. It seems too that the General was not at first pleased when he saw the Brief. The Bishop of Avila, on the other hand, was very unwilling to lose her. There was, in truth, a flaw in the transference to St. Joseph's, as the authorities of the Order had had no part in it. But the General was displeased rather with the Provincial than with St. Teresa, as all might have been avoided if the Provincial had accepted the convent for the Order. The General offered to receive her back into the Order, promising, at the same time, that he would never oblige her to return to the Incarnation, and this settled the matter for the time.

But Rossi did more. He was so struck both with the convent and with Teresa herself, that he enjoined on her to found others of the Primitive Observance, and gave her letters patent allowing her to do this, and inflicting severe censures on any Provincial who opposed the foundations. It is true he gave her nothing more. She speaks of herself as a poor Carmelite nun with a number of patents but no human resources to use them practically. She tells us that she had never asked for these powers, but when she saw what had come about, she began to think that these might be the great things of which our Lord had spoken. Her faith was so great that she looked upon the convents as already founded. The patents are dated at Avila, August 27, 1567.

Rossi says in them that it is with his permission that she is at present Prioress of the Convent of St. Joseph. The convents which she is to establish are to be under the immediate jurisdiction of the General himself. He is to nominate commissaries to govern in his place. The number of religious may amount to twenty-five, but to no more. Teresa is to be allowed, without any hindrance, to take for each foundation two religious from the Convent of the Incarnation, provided they come with her willingly. These powers were afterwards extended by the General in the following May, 1568, to both Old and New Castile, there being apparently some doubt as to which of the two kingdoms had been named in the former patent. She was not, however, to found in the province of Andalusia.

Before the General left Spain finally he added still more important powers to those which he had already given. Teresa had already considered and laid before him the necessity for the foundation of some monasteries of men to be the guides and confessors of the convents of the Reform. Rossi had seen the usefulness of the plan, but he had been afraid to grant the powers for these other foundations, on account of the opposition which he foresaw from the Carmelite Friars, and of which he had indeed himself had some experience. Don Alvaro de Mendoza, the Bishop of Avila, had urged him to grant the powers, but he had declined. But Teresa was so strongly impressed with the necessity of the measure, that she wrote to the General again when on his return to Rome, pressing her request still more

strongly than before. The letter found Father Rossi at Valentia, and completely convinced him. He sent her powers to found two monasteries of men of the Reform, with the consent and supervision of the actual Provincial and his predecessor. Thus the foundation of the Reform among the friars was assured, as well as that among the nuns.

Teresa was full of joy. It is true she had no money, and no subjects, nor did she know where to look for a single friar who might serve for the foundation-stone of the new edifice. God was preparing for her her companion Saint, St. John of the Cross, but of him she as yet knew nothing. However, with her characteristic courage, she began to consider her work as half accomplished. The two monasteries of friars which she had power to establish were to be under the obedience of the General, and were to depend on the Provincial of Castile. Besides their occupation in prayer and contemplation, the friars were to undertake active work for souls whenever zeal or necessity required it. We here again see the apostolic instinct which animated St. Teresa's Reform.

She began her work by undertaking the foundation of a new convent for nuns. Medina del Campo, a large and rich city, was not far distant from Avila, and at this moment Father Balthasar Alvarez was Rector of the College of the Society there. Teresa determined to apply to him for help in finding a house in Medina where she might begin her new foundations. Julian of Avila, the Chaplain of St. Joseph's, took the letter to Medina del Campo. He was

most kindly received by Father Balthasar, and the undertaking was immediately begun. The see of Medina was then vacant, and the ecclesiastic who administered it during the vacancy was averse to the proposal of founding the convent without revenues of its own. Julian of Avila managed to secure the favourable suffrages of many of the most influential inhabitants of the city to a kind of juridical information drawn up for the Vicar Capitular, on the advantages which might result from the foundation of the convent. The Fathers of the Society were foremost in their approval, and a number of magistrates and other distinguished persons joined them. Thus, in a fortnight's time, all difficulties seemed to be surmounted.

Meanwhile, steps were taken to provide a home for the new foundation. Teresa wrote to the Prior of the Carmelite Monastery in Medina, to ask him to purchase a house for her. She had no money in her purse, but she trusted for all material means to God. The Prior of the monastery was Father Antonio de Heredia, of whom we shall hear a good deal in the course of this history. Father Antonio had a great friend in a lady named Maria de Herrara, and he simply asked her to sell him a house which she possessed in the Calle Santiago, one of the best streets in the city. Unfortunately the house was in a most ruinous condition, and required almost to be rebuilt. The lady made no objection, not even requiring any caution or security for the payment of the purchase-money. If she had done so, there was nothing forthcoming. But

as it was impossible for the convent to be opened at once in this ruinous home, Julian of Avila had to look out for another in which the nuns might live until their own house was ready for them. He hired one, but it turned out that it was close to the monastery of the Augustinian Friars, and could not be used as a convent if they opposed it. The money for the rent of this house was furnished by a young lady who had wished to enter the Convent of St. Joseph at Avila, but for whom there was no room there on account of the limitation of the number of its inmates to thirteen. As soon as she heard that there was talk of founding a new convent of the Reform, she applied again to be admitted, and offered a small sum of money to help the foundation. It was enough to pay the rent. This seemed all that could be done for the present, and St. Teresa, who was very anxious to carry out her design, resolved to act at once.

Teresa chose two of the inmates of St. Joseph's for the new foundation. These were her niece, Mary Baptist, and Anne of All the Angels, who was Subprioress, one of the religious of the Incarnation who had entered the new convent when St. Teresa joined her novices there. Besides these, St. Teresa took with her for the new foundation four other religious from the Convent of the Incarnation. There does not appear to have been any opposition to this, and we may suppose that the good ladies there were reconciled to these departures. That she should find among the members of her former community religious ready to take up the austere life of the

Reform, is an evidence of the influence which her character and virtues exercised in her old home. The four who now came from the Incarnation were Iñez de Tapia and Anne de Tapia, sisters, and also cousins of St. Teresa herself. They took the names of Iñez of Jesus and of Anne of the Incarnation. The two others were Teresa de Quesada and Isabella Arias, who afterwards took the name of Isabella of the Cross. Iñez and Anne de Tapia had joined Teresa at the Convent of St. Joseph, a few days before their departure for Medina, and thus already wore the habit of the Reform. The postulant who furnished the slender provision of money which constituted all the wealth of the new foundation took the name of Isabella of Jesus. She did not, as it appears, accompany the Foundress in this first journey.

The moment of leaving the beloved community in St. Joseph's was a sad one. Never again could Teresa expect to be happy and at peace as she had been with them. Of course her absence was not to be for long, but its duration was indefinite, and it might be the first of many more, undertaken for the glory of God. Those who know how tender are the ties which bind together the religious of a convent in which regular observance flourishes, with all its deep charities and perfect harmony of hearts, will easily understand the grief of the religious who remained behind at the departure of Teresa. She had had some little consolations not long before her departure. She had lately contracted a debt of nine thousand reals for the sake of enlarging the

garden of the convent, and this money had been supplied by the application for admission of some postulants who were able to make the present to the community. Just before leaving St. Joseph's, St. Teresa went into one of her favourite hermitages in the garden, where she had had painted a representation of her favourite mystery, our Lord fastened to the column. Here she implored Him that she might have the grace to find her convent on her return in the same state in which she left it. Our Lord granted her prayer. Then she went to take leave of her children. She concealed the affliction of her heart in parting from them, in order not to increase their pain at losing her.

It was on the 13th of August, 1567, nearly five years after the foundation of St. Joseph's. St. Teresa was full of a holy impatience, for she had made up her mind that her new convent must be founded on the feast of the Assumption of our Blessed Lady, and this was but two days off. They travelled in four or five carriages, which conveyed, besides the religious, the little amount of furniture and other necessities which could be spared for them from St. Joseph's. Julian of Avila accompanied the party, with some servants. It had got abroad in Avila that there was to be a new foundation, and the good folk of the city did not fail to have their word or two about the matter. There was great respect for Teresa in the public mind—she had certainly carried her point five years before, and she might well do so again. But to the general view there had been nothing so very successful about St. Joseph's, except that it had

existed. Five years was not a very short time of trial, and the convent had not made much progress. It was full, that was, about all. The little procession of the carriages lumbering slowly through the streets was not very imposing. Some people thought Teresa was mad, others reserved their judgment, some of her best friends exerted themselves to turn her from her project, the Bishop himself did not see much in favour of the new foundation. He did not oppose it out of regard for St. Teresa.

Medina del Campo was thirty leagues distant from Avila, and with the roads of that country and time, there was no chance of their making the journey in one day. Arrangements had been made for them to pass the night on the road. As they were coming near a place called Arevalo, Teresa asked one of the priests who accompanied them to go on before, with a message to a certain Alonzo Esteban, a priest of the town. She told her messenger where he would find Esteban, walking under a certain portico, and that he was to say to him that the Mother Teresa of Jesus was coming to the town, and prayed him to find her a lodging for herself and her company. All happened as she had said, and Esteban found her accommodation in the house of a lady friend. But here Teresa met with her first difficulty. Alonzo Esteban had received a letter to give to Julian of Avila. It was from Alfonso Alvarez, the person who had let them the house at Medina, to which they were actually on their road, saying that he could not let them have it without the consent of the Augustinian Friars, especially as he was a friend of



theirs, and he begged Julian to get the matter arranged before the nuns left Avila. It looked therefore as if the enterprising party might have to return. But St. Teresa had always a fund of courage when it was required, though she was often visited by great fits of depression after difficulties had been surmounted. On this occasion, she says that the news gave her courage ; she thought that, as the devil was beginning to be troublesome, the convent would be a pleasure to our Lord. However, she asked Esteban to keep silence, lest her companions, especially the two last recruits from the Incarnation, should be frightened. One of these two was then Subprioress there, and they were both of good families. "Great opposition had been made to their coming with us, and they came against the will of their kindred, for everybody thought it foolish, and I saw afterwards they had reason enough on their side." When she reached her lodging, she found, to her joy, that Fra Domingo Bañez was in the place. She sent for him at once, and he consoled her in her trouble. He thought that she might soon arrange matters with the Augustinians. Still, however, there was great difficulty. In truth, she had brought with her too large a number of nuns to admit of any delay.

The next morning she received a visit from the Prior of the Carmelite house at Medina del Campo, already mentioned, Father Antonio de Heredia. His advice was to inhabit at once the ruined house which he had purchased, notwithstanding its condition. He said there was room enough, there was a small porch which might be converted into a chapel,

if it was adorned with hangings which might conceal some at least of the defects of the walls. Teresa adopted this suggestion. Julian of Avila went on to Medina to make what preparations he could. The four nuns of the Incarnation, including St. Teresa's own cousins, Iñez of Jesus and Anne of the Incarnation, were sent to wait a few days at Villa Nueva Azerale, where Vicente de Ahumada, brother of the two last mentioned, was Rector, and Teresa went on her journey with her two other companions, Mary Baptist and Anne of All the Angels. They went, on their way, to Olmedo, where the Bishop of Avila was then staying, and were most kindly received by the prelate. But Teresa would not stop there for the night. She had made up her mind to enter her convent on the feast of the Assumption, and the evening before the feast was already begun. So the Bishop sent on the resolute little band in a carriage of his own, and they reached Medina in safety at midnight.

They alighted at the monastery of which Father Heredia was Prior, in order not to make a noise in passing through the streets at such an hour. They went on foot through the streets to the new house. It was a mercy, she says, that they did not come to some trouble, for the bulls which were to fight the next day in public were being driven through the streets as they went. There was little opportunity of examining the house when they arrived. "We entered a court," says Teresa. "The walls seemed to me very ruinous, but not so much so then as afterwards by daylight. It was our Lord's pleasure, it seems, to make the blessed Father blind to the

unseemliness of reserving the Most Holy Sacrament in such a place. On looking at the porch, we saw there was earth in it which must be taken away, the roof was broken, and the walls not plastered. The night was now far spent, and we had nothing but a few hangings, I believe three, and they were little better than none, considering the length of the porch. . . . I knew not what to do, for I saw it would never do to put an altar there. It was our Lord's pleasure to have it done at once, for the steward of the lady had many pieces of tapestry, belonging to her, in the house, and a piece of blue damask ; and he had been told by her to give us everything we should want, for she was very good. When I saw how well provided we were, I gave our Lord thanks, and so did the others. However, we did not know what to do for nails, and it was not a time for buying any, so a search along the walls was begun ; at last, with some trouble, we found enough. Some began to hang the tapestry, and we nuns to clean the floor ; we made such haste, that the altar was ready, and the little bell hung, by daybreak, when Mass was said at once." Father Antonio de Heredia said the Mass. "This was enough to take possession, but we did not stop there, for we had the Most Holy Sacrament reserved. There was a door opposite the altar, and through the chinks thereof we saw Mass said ; there was no other way. Up to this moment I was happy, for it is to me a great joy to see even one church the more in which the Most Holy Sacrament is reserved. But my joy was only for a moment, for when Mass was over I went to look at the court through a little

window, and saw the walls in some places were level with the ground, and it would take many days to repair them.”<sup>1</sup>

She tells us that she was in great anguish of heart. She was afraid of Lutherans everywhere, and there may have been some among the foreign merchants who were to be found at Medina del Campo at that time. She saw that there was reason enough to blame her for what had been done. The work seemed half destroyed already. Before, she had been full of confidence, and no difficulties seemed insurmountable, now she was as full of depression, and there seemed no hope. She thought that she should have to give up what she had begun, and that her companions from the Incarnation would have to go back. Then, as the mistake had been made at the very beginning of the work, she feared that all she had hoped from our Lord's promise for the future would never come about. The depression extended even to the subject of her prayer—she again began to think she might have been deluded. She kept her trouble to herself, however, and towards the evening Father Balthasar sent one of the Fathers to see her, and she gained great consolation and courage from his visit. She began to seek for a hired house where they might take refuge, but none could be found. Meanwhile all the day long people came to visit the new church, and no one seemed to think of blaming the inconsiderateness with which the beginning had been made. No one either thought of having the Blessed Sacrament consumed, as might very well

<sup>1</sup> *Foundations*, c. iii. 9.

have been done, for this would not have cancelled the formal opening of the convent—but, says St. Teresa, if that had been done, everything would have been undone. Teresa set men to watch day and night before the little altar, that no harm might come, and she used to watch herself from a little window lest they should fall asleep. What a number of holy acts of fervent love and desire must she have formed to delight our Lord during these days! The people came in numbers, and were full of devotion on finding our Lord once more almost as in the stable of Bethlehem. “His Majesty,” she says, “never weary of humiliations for our sakes, did not seem as if He wished to depart.”

This state of things lasted for a week or more, and then a merchant of the place, Blas de Medina, who had a good house, gave up to the nuns the upper story of it, where they could live as in a convent of their own. There was a large hall, decorated with gilding, which was turned into a church for the nonce, and the little community was thus perfectly provided for.

This was but the beginning of a series of providences which showed the tender care taken by our Lord of His servant, though He allowed her, like St. Paul, to feel, from time to time, the severest interior trials. In the same street in which the house had been purchased, and which, as has been said, was one of the best in Medina, there dwelt a noble widow, Doña Helena de Quiroga, a near relative of Cardinal de Quiroga, and widow of Don Diego de Villaroel.\* She was a lady of great piety and boundless charity,

and no sooner had she heard of the straits to which the new convent was reduced, than she offered Teresa money enough to build the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, and also to arrange the house in all things for the observance of strict enclosure. The works were begun at once, and the good Prior of the Carmelites, who had certainly led St. Teresa and her companions into the difficulty by his precipitancy, managed the building so well that in two months the nuns were able to enter on their own dwelling. They soon found friends to help them with large alms—the chief of all, however, was Doña Helena. This pious lady gave something still more precious to the new Carmel. She spoke to one of her daughters, Doña Geronima, and the girl entered the convent, taking the name of Geronima of the Incarnation. After a time, Doña Helena was able to free herself from the responsibilities of the education of her family and the management of her property, and to enter herself as Helena of Jesus.

Thus the venture which had been made for the new foundation was completely successful. It was found that, as the Reform became known outside the walls of Avila, it was likely to receive support, notwithstanding its poverty, and to attract generous souls desirous of giving themselves to God in a state of perfect self-sacrifice. The material means required for the new convent were by no means small, and St. Teresa had continually to give orders for work for which she had not the means at hand to pay. But the money always came in, and the convent was one of the best furnished with buildings and other

necessaries. The subjects who presented themselves were also of the best kind. The convent became a home of the highest spiritual virtues and graces. The first nuns, especially the recruits from Avila, had a good deal of suffering in the way of sickness, but these sufferings were abundantly compensated to them.

The foundation of Medina del Campo led to a further advance in the great work committed to St. Teresa. It has already been said that her mind had been occupied, during the visit of the General Rossi to Spain, with the necessity of the foundation of monasteries for Carmelite friars of the Reform, as well as of convents for nuns. It seemed to her, not only that the foundation of the monasteries in question would be a great good in itself, but that it was to a great extent necessary, if the foundation of the convents for nuns were to be secured. The General had yielded to her suggestion, not without difficulty, for he knew that the execution of such a design would encounter great opposition. Teresa had received authority to found two monasteries of men, but as to these her difficulty was still greater than in the case of the convents of nuns, for she had no knowledge of any single friar who would enter the monasteries, if the buildings were provided. However, she determined to ask the advice of her new friend, Father Antonio de Heredia, who had taken so large a part in the foundation of the new convent at Medina del Campo. He was a Father of much recollection, studious, fond of his cell—but on the other hand, he was delicate and unable to do great

penances. Teresa asked his advice without the slightest thought of the answer she would receive. A sudden transport of joy filled the soul of the good Father when she told him of the idea of monasteries of Reformed Friars, and he at once offered himself to be the first to enter. She took it, she says, as a pleasantry, and told him so. But he replied in earnest, that God had long been calling him to a life of greater austerity, and that he had made up his mind to pass to the Order of the Carthusians, the most severe Order in the Church. The Carthusians had promised to receive him. Teresa begged him to wait a little, and in the meantime to practise the kind of life which he would have to continue under the Primitive Rule of Mount Carmel. This was arranged. The novitiate, so to call it, of Father Antonio lasted a full year, and in the meanwhile God allowed him to be tried in another way, beside that of austerities. He was made the subject of some very cruel calumnies, which he bore with great patience. Teresa watched him from a distance, and was delighted to see the progress made by her first spiritual son.

But there was a still greater triumph or consolation awaiting her at Medina. A Carmelite Father named Pedro de Orosco came to visit Father Antonio. He had with him a young member of his own Order, then studying theology at Salamanca. His name was Juan of St. Mathias—a name which was afterwards to be changed into the famous name of John of the Cross. He too, like Father Heredia, had conceived the desire to embrace a more austere kind of life, and had thought of passing to the Carthusians. Pedro



de Orosco, or Father Antonio himself, spoke to St. Teresa of this young Father, who was already remarkable for his recollection and piety. It was arranged that he should come and see Teresa. That night, in her prayer, she received an intimation that this was to be the first Reformed Carmelite friar. When he came the next morning to see Teresa, he opened his heart to her without waiting for her to sound him. She told him then of her design to found monasteries of the Reform for men, and said that, as he was determined to serve God with greater austerity, it was reasonable that he should do this in his own Order rather than in another. He consented to join her Reform, provided there was no long delay in the beginning of the enterprise. Thus St. Teresa found herself with two friars ready for her monastery whenever she found one. In her sprightly way she said she had a friar and a half—for St. John of the Cross was a man of very small stature. The beginning of the foundations of the friars was thus apparently assured.

While Teresa was at Medina del Campo she received a visit from a young nobleman, the brother of the Bishop of Avila, already so often mentioned, Don Bernardino de Mendoza. He took a great interest in St. Teresa's projects, though he was very like other young cavaliers of the time in his ordinary life. He told her that as she was bent on founding convents of Discalced Carmelites, he would give her, if she liked to accept it, a house near Valladolid, at a place called Rio d'Olmos, with a fine garden and vineyard which belonged to the same property. There were objec-

tions to the offer, for the house was three-quarters of a mile from the city of Valladolid, and the religious might have been exposed to great poverty without any one to befriend them. But the offer was made in so frank and generous a manner, that St. Teresa did not think it well to refuse it, and to deprive the young gentleman of the merit of his good deed. She reflected also that, if the situation turned out inappropriate, she might exchange the house and garden for some property in Valladolid which might be more convenient. So she promised Don Bernardino to go and see the house, after she had visited some other places to which she was obliged to go.

She had been requested by Doña Eleanora de Mascareñas to come to Alcala de Henares, near Madrid, in order to visit the convent founded by Maria de Jesus, who had come to her when at Toledo. It seems that Maria had all the qualities for an excellent religious, but that she was not quite the person to govern a community. It was thought that the presence of Teresa would be of great advantage to the convent. Teresa had also another invitation. This was from her former friend, Doña Luisa de la Cerda, who wished to found a convent of her nuns at Malagon, a place belonging to her, in the southern part of New Castile. To go first in this direction was to turn her back on Valladolid, but the calls in the other direction were more imperative. She could go to Alcala first on her way to Malagon, and to reach Alcala she must pass through Madrid.

Teresa left Medina del Campo towards the end of October, 1567. She took with her Anne of All the

Angels and Antonia of the Holy Ghost. The last-named of these two had accompanied her from Avila, the former had been sent for to join her at Medina. She left the two Sisters lately come from the Incarnation, Iñez of Jesus and Anne of the Incarnation, her own cousins, Prioress and Subprioress of the convent at Medina respectively. The sister of the Bishop of Avila, Doña Maria de Mendoza, was on her way to Ubeda, and she insisted on taking Teresa and her companions with her in her own carriage. It was Teresa's wish to travel undisturbed by the presence of secular persons, and, as we shall see, she had arranged a kind of religious order of the day to be observed during her journeys. But she could not refuse the kindness of Doña Maria. So she went thus to Madrid. Doña Eleanora de Mascareñas was there to receive her, and for some days it seems St. Teresa was in her house in the Spanish capital. She was made a sort of "lion." The great ladies of the Court came to see her, and expected no doubt to find her inclined to show off in their presence. But Teresa's humility was vigilant enough to disappoint them. She took great care to say nothing that might make them think her different from other people, and talked to them about secular matters, the fine streets of Madrid, and the like. They went away saying she was a good soul, but not anything out of the way in sanctity. Afterwards, St. Teresa went to stay at the Convent of Discalced Franciscanesses, of which the Superior was a sister of St. Francis Borja. The house had been founded by Doña Juana, sister of Philip II. In this convent St. Teresa spent a fort-

night, greatly to the edification of the good religious. Doña Maria de Mendoza then took her on to Alcala de Henares. She reached Alcala in the last half of November. It seems that Maria de Jesus had been too severe in her government, and had gone far towards ruining the health of the nuns by her excessive austerities. Teresa was received by Maria and her nuns as if she had been their Superior. The keys of the house were brought to her, and the whole community was ready to be directed by her counsels. She gave them the Rule as it was observed in the Convent of St. Joseph, and explained the exceptions which might be made in case of necessity. St. Teresa wished to place the convent under the jurisdiction of the Order, as she had placed her own new foundation of Medina del Campo. But this proposal was opposed by the Archbishop of Toledo, in whose diocese Alcala was situated, and, on the advice of Father Bañez, Teresa abandoned the scheme. When, some seventeen years later, St. Teresa's biographer, Father Ribera, visited the convent at Alcala, he found in full observance the Rules and Constitutions which she had given.

Teresa remained at Alcala till the middle of February, 1568. Then she went to Doña Luisa de la Cerda, at Toledo, in order to concert the measures necessary for the foundation proposed by that lady at Malagon. This foundation cost Teresa a severe struggle. It was then that she was obliged to abandon her resolution that none of her convents should have an endowment. Malagon was a small place, and it would have been impossible to expect

that the inhabitants would be able to support the convent permanently on their alms. This fact made St. Teresa very averse to the foundation. But on the other hand her great obligations to Doña Luisa, and the good which might be done by the foundation, made it difficult to refuse. It was a great trial to her. She laid the matter before learned men, and her confessor, Domingo Bañez, told her to give way. His reason was, that the Council of Trent having authorized the foundation of convents with endowments, she ought to give up her own opinion on the matter, for the sake of the great good which would ensue. Doña Luisa gave a sufficient endowment, for St. Teresa tells us she always wished her convents either to be altogether poor, or to possess enough for the nuns never to be forced to beg of any one for what might be necessary. Teresa also insisted that no nun should possess anything of her own, and that poverty should be perfectly observed according to the Constitutions in this as in other houses.

Ribera has an interesting passage on this change in the plans of St. Teresa. He tells us that it was believed that our Lord had ordered her on this occasion to conform herself to the advice of her guides. She did this, says Ribera, showing always and in everything entire obedience to God and to His ministers. He answers the question as to the apparent contradiction between the conduct of St. Teresa on this and other occasions, and the visions and revelations which she had had on the subject of the entire poverty of her convents. He says that there was a great providence of God in her being differently

guided in different conjectures. If Teresa, he says, had waited for an endowment for her first convent, it would never have been founded at all. She was unable to provide revenues, and the design would have been divulged and, once made public, would have been hindered. It would have been impossible to found the other convents but for the previous foundation of St. Joseph's. They also did not wait for any assured foundation. Thus it was of the utmost importance that, in the beginning, the principle of having no foundation should be affirmed. On the other hand, there were to be a great number of these convents founded, for the benefit of so many souls who might there serve God in perfection and holiness, and it would have been difficult to keep them in strict observance if there had not been some revenues assured to them. The true safeguard of observance is not so much the absolute poverty of the convent or monastery, as the absolute observance of the rule of poverty by each individual religious. As long as this is observed, the community may be at ease without the poverty of the members being infringed. In such convents or monasteries the religious have so much more independence of the world, that they have no need of aid from their relations, no need for cultivating acquaintances and encouraging the visits of those outside, in order to have the chance of receiving presents for themselves or for the community.

Ribera tells us that while she was staying at Toledo, before the foundation of Malagon, Teresa did all that she could to hide the gifts which she received, but that she was twice seen in ecstasy in the

presence of others. It was at Malagon that her wonderful energy showed itself capable of producing results little short of miraculous. The convent in which the nuns were first installed was in the piazza of the little town, and even at Malagon the piazza was a very noisy place. The religious were constantly disturbed, and after a time it became evident that they must find a home on some other spot. St. Teresa chose a field full of olive-trees, near the castle, and Doña Luisa most generously built a fine church and convent. The exact year of this change is not chronicled, but it is said that Teresa arrived in the last week of November, on the feast of St. Catharine, and was told by the workmen that they had yet six months' work to get through before the house was ready. Teresa was very poorly at the time. She had travelled far over bad roads, she could not sleep at night, her body was racked with pain. Nevertheless, she was up early in the morning after her arrival, and went to the new building to examine for herself. The statement made by the workmen was not unfounded, but it did not suit St. Teresa. She was resolved that her spiritual daughters must enter on their new house with all despatch, and instead of six months she said that all must be finished in a fortnight. That would just bring them to the feast of the Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Lady. The workmen protested that it was impossible, but it was done. Teresa, who had gone to bed after her arrival in such a state as to make it seem impossible for her to leave it for some days, was up early every morning, and went straight to the convent, where she spent the day, urging on

and directing the work, and taking her own part in it. She came home at eleven at night, in time to finish her Office and go to bed. All was accomplished as she desired, and on the feast of our Lady the nuns marched in procession after the Blessed Sacrament, and accompanied by a great concourse of people from the country round, to the church of the new convent, where Benediction was given. After the ceremony, that same evening, St. Teresa was seized with the illness from which she was suffering when she had arrived, and was almost paralyzed with pains all over her body. This was at a later time.

We must return, however, to the original convent at Malagon, in which the religious seem to have remained for a considerable space of time. One of the novices, whose admission must have given especial joy to St. Teresa's heart, was the young lady, Maria de Salazar, who has already been mentioned as having been so deeply impressed at the time of Teresa's first visit to Doña Luisa at Toledo, some years before this time, when the foundation of St. Joseph's at Avila was still unaccomplished. Maria had remained with Doña Luisa in the interval, and had made great progress under the guidance of the Fathers of the Society. It was natural that she should enter the new Carmel in the convent built and endowed by her own dear friend, and she received the habit from St. Teresa during her sojourn at Malagon.

Teresa, when she went to Toledo to negotiate with Doña Luisa, had with her the two nuns already mentioned, Anne of All the Angels and Antonia of the Holy Ghost. She sent for four more from Avila



—Mary of the Blessed Sacrament, Mary Magdalene, Isabel of Jesus, and Isabel of St. Joseph. These last four were taken from the Convent of the Incarnation, and the fact shows us that the little band of devoted friends whom St. Teresa had left behind her in her first convent was by no means exhausted. Thus she was able to recruit her new foundations without diminishing or greatly disturbing the community at St. Joseph's. When all was concluded, Doña Luisa took them all with her to Malagon, where they lodged in the castle until the house was ready to receive them. It was on Palm Sunday, a day to which Teresa had a great devotion, that the solemn founding of the convent took place. The parishioners came in procession to receive them, and the nuns walked in their white mantles, and with their veils over their faces, to the Church, where a sermon was preached, and then the Blessed Sacrament was carried in procession to the new house. It was a day of much devotion, and the people were greatly moved. This new convent, like that at Medina del Campo, was dedicated to St. Joseph. There were now, therefore, three convents of the Reform to attest St. Teresa's devotion to the blessed spouse of Mary.

The first Prioress of Malagon was Anne of All the Angels, who has been already so often mentioned. She came from the Convent of the Incarnation, and had joined Teresa when she was allowed to leave that convent to reside at St. Joseph's. The letter which we shall presently translate enables us to gather a few more facts, of which we should otherwise have been ignorant, concerning the foundation of

Malagon. The parish priest of the place lent his aid most cordially, and was of great use to St. Teresa. It seems that she used him as her confessor. The steward or manager of the estate for Doña Luisa was also very active in helping her, as well as two brothers, Alonzo and Antonio de Cabria, and a person called Carleval, whose brother was a priest and was left by Teresa when she went away, to be the confessor of her convent. St. Teresa speaks of him in the very highest terms, and says that he was second to none in fitness for such an office except Father Paul Hernandez of the Society, who had heard her own confessions while she was at Toledo, and who perhaps visited her and her nuns occasionally while she was at Malagon. It seems also that Teresa took care to provide an instructress for the girls of the place, who was to teach them the ordinary work of women at that time: she was to live at the expense of the convent, and was to be "very Theatine" in spirit—that is, very Jesuit, for the Jesuits at that time in Spain were called Theatines.

Although the foundation was so new, St. Teresa was in a hurry to leave Malagon, partly because she was wanted at Avila in her own convent, from which she had now been many months absent, partly because of the sudden death of Don Bernardino de Mendoza the young gentleman who had given her the house at Valladolid, of which we have spoken. Don Bernardino died at Ubedo, the place to which Doña Maria de Mendoza was bound when she took Teresa to Alcala de Henares, and there had been circumstances about his death which made his friends

anxious about him. He had been taken ill suddenly, the evil had made very rapid progress, and he had lost the power of speech before he could receive the last sacraments of the Church. Thus he was unable to make a confession, though he made signs enough of sorrow and of prayer to our Lord for pardon. St. Teresa had prayed for him, when she heard the news, and it was revealed to her that his salvation had been in serious danger, but that he had found pardon because of the good work he had done for the Blessed Mother of God in giving his house for a convent of her Order. Nevertheless he was to be detained in Purgatory until the first Mass was said in the new convent. The thought of the sufferings of this soul added wings to the steps of St. Teresa, but she was detained by necessary business first at Avila, and afterwards at Medina del Campo, whither she went on her way to Valladolid. She had passed by Toledo on her way to Avila, and there had begun the negotiation for the foundation of a convent of her nuns in that famous city. Father Paul Hernandez, of the Society of Jesus, who had been her confessor during her last stay in the city, was the person who urged on her this new foundation.

Doña Luisa de la Cerda was not at Toledo when St. Teresa arrived there on her way from Malagon. Teresa seems to have spent a short time in her friend's house at Toledo, and it is to this period that the following letters belong. It will be seen how anxious she was at this time to have the book of her Life submitted to Master Juan of Avila. Doña Luisa had taken it into Andalusia for this purpose.

LETTER V.—*To Doña Luisa de la Cerda, in  
Andalusia.*

JESUS.

Toledo, May 27th.

May this Good Master be with your Ladyship.

To-day, the feast of the Ascension, the licentiate gave me your letter. They had hardly told me of his arrival before I felt deeply grieved, for I guessed at once the cause of his return. After that, I read your letter. Blessed be God that you are well, Don Juan too, and the other gentlemen ! As to the disappointment, do not let it trouble you. Though I say this to you, however, I felt it a good deal myself. Indeed, I told the licentiate that he had behaved badly. He is much ashamed now, as far as I can see, but he is a man who does not know his own mind. On the one hand he wishes to serve you, he says he is very much attached to you, and so he is ; but on the other hand he is not sufficiently master of himself to do what he wishes. He is like Alonzo de Cabria, a little given to melancholy. What strange differences of character there are in this world ! The licentiate who might serve you, will not, and I who would have such pleasure in doing so, cannot. Poor mortals, these and worse, are the vexations with which we have to put up, and yet we do not comprehend the nothingness of the world, and we will not renounce it.

I am not surprised that you are in trouble. I had already guessed that you had not a little to suffer, knowing your character, which is not made to get on with everybody. But as you decided on this course only to serve our Lord, take patience and act in concert with our Divine Master, He will not leave you lonely. No one here has found anything to say against your departure, they only pity you. Try to find distractions, and consider how precious your health is to us. Mine has been very wretched lately. It

would have been worse, had it not been for the delicate attentions, that by your orders, I received in your house. Indeed, I needed them, for the heat of the journey had fatigued me extremely, and the pain from which I suffered, when you were at Malagon, had arrived at such a pitch, that they were obliged to bleed me twice on my arrival at Toledo. I could not turn myself in bed, so violent was the pain that I felt from my shoulders to my head. They made me take some medicine afterwards. To-morrow, Friday, I shall have been here a week. I leave here much weakened, for a great deal of blood was taken from me, but it was very good for me. Deprived as I was of the presence of my lady and friend, I felt my solitude keenly. The Lord be praised in all things! Your servants, and Reolin in particular, were perfect. I really wondered how you, being in Andalusia, managed to surround me with so much care here. I commend you earnestly to our Lord. Here I am well again, though still a little weak. It is the parish priest of Malagon who is coming with me. I cannot tell you how greatly I am indebted to him. Alonzo de Cabria gets on so well with your manager that he did not wish to come away with me: he maintained that it would vex the manager too much. As he was very tired from his journey and I had such good company, I did not press him. I ought to tell you that the manager behaves very well, they say that he could not behave better. It is not only Alonzo de Cabria, but every one else who speaks well of him. Don Hernando is much pleased with him.

Carleval is gone, and I believe that he is not to return. . . . They say that God chose Alonzo de Cabria to work at the foundation of Malagon and that the hospital should contribute towards it, and they say rightly, for the brother of Carleval himself has come to take his place. I must tell your ladyship that I have come away more than satisfied at leaving him there. If I except my well-beloved Father

Paul Hernandez, I do not think that I could have left a confessor of greater merit to the nuns. We look upon it as a special grace that God has sent him to us. He is a man of much prayer and most experienced in spiritual ways. He is very well contented. Only we must arrange certain little matters for him. But as I have left all this, for you, in writing at Malagon, I will not tell you more now. This Father is most highly spoken of here.

The Sisters are very happy. We have decided that for the instruction of little girls, some woman should be engaged—a great Theatine. The convent is to feed her; it will do this—we must give something in the way of alms, and it may as well be in this way. This woman will teach, gratis, the little girls to work, and, by this means, having them in her own hands, she will teach them the Christian doctrine and their duties towards God, which will do a great deal of good. Father Carleval, too, is going to get a young cleric for the church, and an organ, as it seems to be called. He and the parish priest will teach the Christian doctrine. I hope, by the goodness of God, that a great deal of good will be the result. Indeed, I come away from there very much pleased, as you too ought to be, and pray, believe me, that my absence will not injure in any way the discipline of the convent. The religious are so fervent, they have such an excellent confessor, and the parish priest is so devoted to them, that I do not, in the least, doubt that they will make fresh progress in perfection day by day.

As to the late chaplain, no one dares tell him to leave off saying the Masses. Pray, madam, have him written to on the subject. Though Father Paul Hernandez is looking out for some one to tell him so, I wish you would yourself undertake it. The manager promises to make him so comfortable that he will be better off than before. But as he will have to console him, he does not want to be

the one to give him the notice. Do not neglect this business, I beg, madam. A third of the payment has already been made to the licentiate; it was Miranda who made it. Pray say who is to repay Miranda. When the devil sees the injury such a man is sure to inflict upon him, he will not fail to hatch some plot to make us lose him. Look carefully into the matter, and do not allow the spirit of darkness to accomplish his purpose. As for myself, I have been so busy to-day that it has not been possible for me to spare a moment to examine it. Now it is too late, the night is far advanced and I am, besides, very weak.

I have carried off the chair saddle which you had at the castle (which I beg you to approve of), as well as another very comfortable one which I bought here. I know that you will be delighted that this saddle, which no one used, should serve me on my travels. At least I shall have the pleasure of making them with something of yours. Our Lord will grant me the grace, I hope, of returning in the same saddle; if not, I will send it back to you as soon as I return.

I have already told you, madam, in the letter which I left for you at Malagon, that it seems to me that the devil is interfering to prevent the Father Master Avila from seeing my manuscript. I should not like him to die without seeing it, it would be a great misfortune. As you are so near, I beg you to send it to him, well sealed, by express, and to write commending it to him. I know that he has a great wish to see it, and he will read it as soon as he can. I have just received a letter here, from Father Dominic Bañez, in which he begs me to send him this manuscript, by express, as soon as I arrive at Avila. I am in much trouble and I do not know what to do. As I told you, if these people come to know of it, it would do me much harm. For the love of our Lord make all possible haste.

Look upon it as His service that is at stake. Lastly, take courage on the journeys that you have got to make into strange parts, remembering the way in which our Lady and our Father St. Joseph journeyed into Egypt.

I shall pass by Escalona, where the Marchioness is : she sent to me, here, all necessaries for the journey. I wrote her word that you had provided everything most generously, that I thanked her and would come to see her. I shall only spend half a day with her, if it is possible, and that because Father Garcia de Toledo begged me much to do so, telling me that he had promised it and that it would not be out of my way. Don Hernando and Doña Anna did me the honour to pay me a visit. Don Pedro Niño, Doña Margaret, and our other friends did me the same honour. I was obliged to see many other people, and some tired me not a little. The servants in your house are very retired and see no one. I beg of you most earnestly to write to the Señora Rectress, for you see you are under great obligations to her. I was not able to see or to thank her in person for the presents she sent me, because I was almost the whole time in bed. To-morrow, before my departure, I shall go to see the Prioress, who pressed me urgently to do so.

I would not speak of the death of the Duchess of Medina-Celi unless I thought that you were aware of it, but I think that you will have heard of it, before my letter arrives. I hope that you are not too much distressed by it, for, in taking her to Himself so quickly, our Lord has spared those who loved her, and herself still more. Had her life been prolonged, with the complaint from which she was suffering, it would have been to see her die a thousand times over. She was in such good dispositions that she will live for ever and ever, and I shall be united to her for all eternity. This hope makes me bear the absence of one so dear to me. I kiss the hands of all my good lords with



you. Antonia kisses yours. Say many things from me to your dear Don Juan.<sup>2</sup> I commend him often to our Lord.

May this adorable Master have you in His holy keeping, and always lead you with His hand. I am already very tired, so I shall not say anything more.

Your unworthy servant and subject,

TERESA DE JESUS.

P.S.—Our “Eternal Father” has had his leave given him. On one hand I am sorry, on the other I see that it is our Lord’s will, Who also chooses that you should suffer alone. I do not doubt that the Father will write to you as soon as he finds some one to whom he can give the letter. I have entrusted this to Doña Francisca with many injunctions. If I find an opportunity I will be sure to write to you from Avila. I forgot to tell you that our Father has spoken to me of a religious who, besides knowing how to read very well, has qualities which please him. She has only two hundred ducats, but our Sisters are so few and the want is so great in a convent which is only beginning, that I am of opinion that she should be received. I prefer to take a girl of this sort to one who is stupid, and if I find another like her, I shall admit no others. Good-bye, my dear lady. I do not like to end, and I do not know how I can go away from one I love so much, and to whom I am under such great obligations.

This letter is a fair specimen of the manner in which St. Teresa wrote to her friends, and its perusal will show the reader that the translation is no easy task. We should say that our translation is free in some respects—for instance, with true Spanish ceremoniousness, the Saint very seldom addresses Doña Luisa directly in the second person: it is always,

<sup>2</sup> Don Juan was the son of Luisa de la Cerda.

“your ladyship.” The allusions to persons mentioned in this letter have puzzled the commentators and editors. The licentiate who is spoken of in the opening paragraph as having left Doña Luisa to herself, may perhaps have been some priest who had accompanied her into Andalusia, and who did not like to stay long away from his home. We shall see, hereafter, that to St. Teresa herself Andalusia was almost a foreign country, and when she exhorts her friend to remember the sufferings of the Holy Family in Egypt, she may mean no more than that Doña Luisa is away from her usual home in Andalusia. Some of the other allusions have been already explained. The care of Teresa to provide for the industrial training of the girls of Malagon is an anticipation of the difficulty which cloistered nuns have frequently to cope with, when they are the only persons in the place in which they live capable of giving instruction of that kind, which it is yet difficult for them to give without going beyond their own vocation.

The great anxiety of Teresa that the book of her Life should be submitted to Master Juan of Avila is worthy of note. She seems almost to have had a presentiment of his approaching death. She wished him to see it on account of the strong recommendation of Francisco de Soto y Salazar, a member of the Holy Office at Toledo. We shall hear again of her visit to the Marchesa de Escalona. The Dons and Doñas who are mentioned as having visited her while in Doña Luisa’s house must have been some of the great people of the city. The “Señora Rectress” was

the Superior of a great "College for noble ladies," founded by Cardinal Siliceo. The Prioress seems to have been the Prioress of a Geronymite Convent at Toledo. / Lastly, the "Eternal Father," who is mentioned in the postscript, is thought to be the good Father Paul Hernandez, and the name may express the great reverence in which he was held by Teresa and her friend. The words about him are ambiguous, and perhaps may have referred to some rumour that he was about to be sent to some other place.

The two next letters are written after St. Teresa's arrival at Avila.

LETTER VI.—*To Doña Luisa de la Cerda, in Andalusia.*

JESUS.

Avila, June 9, 1568.

May this adorable Master be with your Ladyship.

I arrived here, at Avila, very tired, the Wednesday before Pentecost. I was so ill at Toledo, as I wrote you word, that I was not at all in a fit state to travel. Consequently our journey was made slowly, in company of the parish priest, who was of great use, as he is very knowing about everything.

I have had a visit from one of my relations who was passing by this place, and he told me that, when a child, he had an attack of stone, and that on drinking some water from a fountain in your part of the country, he was perfectly cured. I am rejoiced at such good news, for I hope, by the mercy of our Lord, that it may be the same in Don Juan's case. May our Divine Master grant us his cure! We are going to ask for it here, with most earnest entreaties. I kiss the hands of your ladyship, and of all my good lords.

I found Doña Teresa, daughter of the Marquis of Velada, already a religious and very happy. Sunday last I saw the Marchioness of Villena, she loaded me with kindness. I thanked her for her offers of help, but I want no one but my dear Doña Luisa. May our Lord bring her back to me in perfect health and without accident! Once again I entreat you not to neglect my business, for the reasons I have said. I attach great importance to it. As I left a long letter for you at Malagon, and another even longer at Toledo, I shall say no more now. These lines are only to announce my safe arrival.

Your unworthy servant and subject,

To-day is Wednesday.

TERESA DE JESUS.

LETTER VII.—*To Doña Luisa de la Cerda, in Andalusia.*

JESUS.

Avila, June 23, 1568.

May this adorable Master be with your Ladyship.

The courier is in such a hurry to start that he barely gives me leisure to tell you so, but my love for you has made me find time. Oh, my very dear lady, how often I think of you and your troubles! And with diligence I commend you to our Lord! May it please this Divine Master soon to restore health to your good gentlemen, so that I may not always be at such a distance from you. I should be comforted if only I could see you at Toledo. As for myself, I am pretty well, thank God. I shall start for Valladolid after the feast of St. Peter. Remember, madam, that in trusting you with the manuscript, it is my soul itself that I trusted to you. Make haste, I implore you, to send it back to me as soon as possible and by some safe way, but take good care that it is accompanied by a letter from the holy man, as we agreed together, telling me what he thinks of it. I must tell you that I am seized

with fright since I heard that Father Bañez is coming this summer, so much do I fear that he will surprise me in the very act of naughtiness. Pray, madam, for the love of our Lord, send it to me without delay as soon as the holy man has seen the manuscript. If you wish, you can see it again when you return to Toledo. Do not trouble yourself for Salazar to see it, unless it should be very easy to let him have it. It is of much more consequence to send it back to me as soon as possible.

I hear from your convent at Malagon that all is going on well, and that our Sisters go on improving in perfection more and more. I have no difficulty in believing it. Everybody thinks here that they are very fortunate in having their present confessor: they know him, and they marvel as I do to see them so well off. Our Lord has brought him there, no doubt, for the good of souls, and what makes me think so is that the good fruit unto salvation has already been produced there, which has been produced by him wherever he has been.

The Carmelites of Malagon are held in great esteem here, and the friars are very much pleased with them. I pray God that He will let me return there with your ladyship. Our Sisters of Avila, too, make great progress in spiritual ways. All kiss your hand very humbly, and I do the same to Don Juan and the other gentlemen. Time fails me and I must end. To-morrow is the feast of St. John. We shall be sure to commend to him, most earnestly, our patroness and foundress, as well as your son, Don Juan, our patron.

Your unworthy servant,

TERESA DE JESUS.

P.S.—You must direct the packets and letters to me, if you do not wish that the Superior should do something strong.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> “That is to say that she should end by being a little displeased with you” (Note by Père Bouix).

We need add but few words of comment on these two letters. The mention of Father Bañez in the last of the two, and the apparent alarm of St. Teresa lest he should blame her on finding that she had again submitted the book of her Life to inspection, even when the person who was to pass judgment on it was so great a man as Juan of Avila, are to be accounted for on the supposition, of the truth of which there is good evidence, that Father Bañez had told her to be quite at rest on the subject, and that he was likely to be displeased at her having done what might, even possibly, once more upset her tranquillity. The Salazar mentioned in the same paragraph may be either Father Gaspar de Salazar, of the Society, of whom we have already heard so much, or perhaps the Inquisitor at Toledo.

Another letter, written at this time, brings us across one of those holy families of which Spain was at that time full, some of which we have already met with in the course of this history. This letter is written in answer to an application from a gentleman of Segura, in the kingdom of Murcia, who had applied to Teresa, offering to found a convent into which his own daughters might enter, but on condition that it should be under the jurisdiction of the Society of Jesus. To such a request there could be but one answer, but the circumstances deserve record. Rodriguez de Moya was a pious gentleman, whose wife, of equal piety with himself, had left him three daughters to be the heiresses of their considerable fortune. The two eldest, Catalina and Francesca, had consecrated themselves to God by vows of virginity,

though they had not entered convents. Such vows were not, and never have been, unfrequent in Catholic countries, where they are constantly taken and kept by ladies who have no vocation for the cloister. Rodriguez intended to make his youngest daughter, Mary, settle in the married life, but she too had the same desire with her sisters to belong to no one but our Lord. She prayed Him to withdraw her soon from the world, that she might know no love but His. Her prayer was heard, and she died a holy death at the age of fifteen, after confiding to her sisters the secret that she also had bound herself by a vow of perpetual virginity. Her father now began to consider what was the most Christian use to be made of his fortune. His daughters agreed with him in choosing the foundation, in their native place, of a college of the Society of Jesus and of a convent of Carmelite Nuns to be under the obedience of the Fathers. It was with this intention in view that he addressed to St. Teresa the letter, which she answered as follows :

LETTER VIII.—*To Rodriguez de Moya.*

JESUS.

Avila, July 28, 1568.

May the grace of the Holy Spirit be with you always, sir !

Our Lord has gathered together in our houses souls who fill me with admiration and put me to the blush. Indeed, we ought to choose none who are not persons of prayer and suited to our manner of life, otherwise we cannot receive them. God fills with contentment and a perpetual joy souls such as these, and makes it like a

paradise on earth. This is no more than the strict truth. You can make inquiries about it from many people, and in particular from the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, especially if Providence takes into your parts some of those who have been here, who know me and who have seen with their own eyes what I tell you. These religious are my Fathers, and it is to them, after our Lord, that my soul owes all the good which it possesses, if it possesses any at all. One of my chief reasons for liking your young ladies was knowing that they had been under their direction, and this also makes me anxious to oblige you as far as it is in my power. It is not every spiritual person with whom I am content for our convents, but those only who are directed by those Fathers. And our communities are composed, almost entirely, of such. Indeed, at this moment, I do not remember ever to have received one who was not their spiritual daughter, because they are those who suit us best. As it was these Fathers who trained my soul, our Lord has done me the favour of letting their spirit be implanted in the convents which I have established. If you are acquainted with the Rules, you will see that on many points our Constitutions are identical with theirs. As to the Constitutions by which our convents are now governed, I have drawn them up by virtue of a Brief obtained from the Sovereign Pontiff. And lately, when our Reverend Father General came here, he approved them and ordered that they should be observed in all the houses which I found. He had further left orders that the Fathers of the Society shall preach in them, and that no Superior can put any hindrance in the way. If they will hear our confessions they can also do so, but they cannot generally confess us, because of one of their rules which forbids it. So that all we can obtain of them is, that they should hear us from time to time. They see us very often, nevertheless, and give us their advice, and in this way do us great good.



I had the same wish as your young ladies, to be under the jurisdiction of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus. I wished to put this house under them, and took some steps with this object. But I know for a positive certainty, that they will undertake no convent, not even that of the Princess. If they would accept any, they would have many in the kingdom, but it is not possible to obtain it. I truly thank our Lord, that of all the Orders, we are the one which enjoys the greatest freedom of intercourse with the religious of the Society, a freedom which no one now thinks of taking from us, nor ever will.

At the present moment, thanks to our Lord, some monasteries of the primitive rule are being founded for friars of our Order, on the model of those which I have established for nuns, and where the same spirit of prayer and mortification will prevail. It is to these monasteries we are to be subject. Our Very Reverend Father General has given leave for them to be founded. There are already several subjects, both amongst seculars and religious, who feel themselves exceedingly drawn to embrace this manner of life, if only houses are not wanting. However, if I see that it suits to establish one in your parts, I will perhaps set to work about it, supposing that it is in my power, and that I get the letters patent for it. But according to the tenour of these patents, the monasteries which I found can only be under the General of the Order and those to whom he entrusts their government. This is my most ardent desire, that with our Lord's help they may always maintain themselves in their first perfection. Pray believe me, sir, that so great is my sorrow at the sight of relaxed monasteries in which no prayer is made, that in those I found, I seek every possible means of prescribing in the future the spirit that animates them to begin with.

I beg, for the love of our Lord, that you will not forget me in your prayers. I make the same request to your

young ladies. As to the matter of the foundation which you propose, think it over with special care. If it is to be for the glory of Lord, let it be made. If not, prevent it being put into execution. This is the course that we shall also follow here.

Your unworthy servant,

TERESA DE JESUS.

The foundation of the convent seems to have been abandoned after this, but Rodriguez persisted in the design of establishing a college of the Society at Segura. But in the year after this, Catalina, the eldest daughter of Rodriguez, a young lady of great penance and prayer, followed her younger sister to the grave. Her death produced a lasting effect on her father, who from that time became still more devout. The College was founded and accepted by St. Francis Borja; Rodriguez put himself entirely under the direction of the Fathers, fasted frequently, did great penance, and passed his time in good works or exercises of piety. He died six years after his elder daughter, and was buried in the church of the College in a marble tomb, to which his remaining child, Francesca, transported the bodies of her mother and sisters, and in which she was herself laid twenty years later, having spent her life in works of piety, religion, and charity of every kind. She seems never to have aspired to the religious vocation, after the refusal of St. Teresa to accept the projected convent at her native place.

Before passing on to other matters, we may as well add here, somewhat out of the chronological order of events, that St. Teresa received the letter,

of which she was so desirous, from Master Juan of Avila, in the autumn of the year of which we are speaking. It is passed over as too long for insertion by most of her biographers, but it will be found in full in the Preface to the excellent translation of the book of her Life by Mr. David Lewis. The letter is dated September 12, 1568, from Montilla. Master Juan begins very modestly, saying that he had read the book, not as thinking that he was capable of judging of it, but in the hope of learning something from it—and that although he has been comforted by it, though not so much as he might, he would not send it back without giving some opinion upon it. He says that it is not fit to be in the hands of every one, that the language in some places needs correction, in others explanation; that it may be useful for herself, and not for others. He has marked the points as to which he would have something to say, but he is not at present able to arrange them. The doctrine of prayer is for the most part sound; the raptures possess the marks of truth; what is said about the manner in which God teaches the soul is unobjectionable. He then says a good deal about interior and exterior “locutions,” as to which it is often difficult to distinguish what comes from the good spirit, what from the bad. One rule of discernment is that the locutions, if good, are sent in time of need, and for some good end. A good man does not speak unadvisedly, neither does God. Considering this, and that the “locutions” in the book are agreeable to Scripture and the Church, he thinks they are from God. There is danger in visions, but if they

continue after we have entreated God to lead us in the ordinary way of his servants, if the soul derives good from them, and if they do not lead to vanity but to deeper humility, and the like, there is no reason for avoiding them. The universal safeguard is that a man should not trust himself, but be guided by others, who can give him light. These things are not rashly to be condemned—not even if the person who receives the favours should not be perfect, for they are sometimes granted to others. It is wrong to disbelieve these things, simply because they are so high, and because it seems incredible that God should so far condescend to His poor creatures, for God is Love. He thinks that Teresa has resisted these favours even longer than was right. They have done her soul good, and in particular have made her see her own faults and wretchedness. He inclines to think them good, provided she is careful not to rely on them altogether, especially if they are very extraordinary, and bid her do out of the way things. Even when they come from God, Satan may mix up with them suggestions of his own. Holiness lies in a humble love of God and of our neighbour. It is better not to worship what is seen in these visions, but to raise our hearts to our Lord in Heaven or in the Blessed Sacrament, and so also with the visions of the saints. The things mentioned in the book befall persons, he says, even in our day, and there is great certainty that they come from God. She is to go on her way, then, always suspecting robbers, giving thanks to God, Who has given her His love, the knowledge of herself, and the love of penance

and the Cross. Her favours are not to be despised, because there are signs that they most of them come from our Lord, and those that do not come from Him will not hurt her, if she asks for direction.

Juan of Avila died in the summer of the next year, and it is said that he wrote again to encourage St. Teresa shortly before his death.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

#### *Durvelo, Valladolid, and Toledo.*

WHILE St. Teresa was staying at Avila after her return from Toledo, she received a visit from a gentleman of the town, Rafael Megia Velasquez, to whom she had never before spoken, who offered her a spot where she might fix the first monastery of the Reformed Friars. It was a little place called Durvelo, a hamlet of about twenty houses, and the dwelling which he proposed to make over for the new monastery was the house of an agent who received for him the rents of a small property in the neighbourhood. Teresa says she could imagine what sort of a place it was likely to be, but she promised the gentleman, after thanking him very kindly for his offer, to go and see it on her way to Medina del Campo, whither she was to go before reaching Valladolid.

St. Teresa's account of this visit to Durvelo is so characteristic that we must find room for it here.

She set out from Avila in the last week in June with her companion, Antonia of the Holy Ghost, and the good priest, Julian of Avila.

We set out early in the morning, but as we did not know the road we missed it, and the place being but little known we could not hear much about it. We spent the whole day in great toil, for the sun was very strong; when we thought we were near the place, we had to go as far again. I shall always remember that wearisome and winding road! We reached the house a little before nightfall, and the state it was in when we entered was such that we could not venture to pass the night there, because of the exceeding absence of cleanliness and of the crowd of harvest men. It had a fair porch, two rooms, one beyond the other, and a garret, with a small kitchen. This was all the building which was to be our monastery. I thought that the porch might be made into a church, the garret into a choir, which would do well, and the friars could sleep in the room. The nun who was with me, though much better than I am, and much given to penance, could not bear that I should think of having a monastery there, and she said to me: "Certainly, Mother, there is nobody, however great his spirituality, who can bear this—do not speak of it."

The Father who was travelling with me, though of the same mind with the nun, my companion, did not oppose me when I told him of my purpose. We went and spent the night together in the church, but on account of the great fatigue we had undergone, we could not pass it watching. When we reached Medina, I spoke at once to the Father Fra Antonio, and told him what had happened, and that if he had the courage to remain there, for a time, he might be certain that God would soon help him, and that to begin was everything. I think I saw then what our Lord had done, and as clearly, so to speak, as I see it now,

and even much more than I see at present, for at this moment when I am writing this, by the goodness of God, ten monasteries of the Barefooted Friars have been built. I told him, too, he might depend on it that neither the late Father Provincial nor the present Father Provincial—for as I said in the beginning, their consent must be had—would ever give us leave if we were seen living in a large house; besides there was no help for it, and if they were settled in that little hamlet, neither the one nor the other would take any thought about them. God had given him a courage greater than mine, and so he answered that he would live not only there but even in a pigsty. Fra John of the Cross was of the same mind. Now it remained for us to obtain the consent of the two Fathers I have just spoken of, for it was on that condition our Father General had given us permission.<sup>1</sup>

Fra Antonio was commissioned to do all he could to get some funds for making provision for the new monastery, the needs of which could not be great. Teresa went on to Valladolid, for the purpose of founding the new convent there as soon as possible, and she took with her Fra John of the Cross, that she might give him all the instructions in her power as to the way of life practised in the convents of the Reform.

He had the means [she says] of learning our way of life [they could not keep enclosure in the new house for several days], so that he might clearly understand everything, both the mortifications we practise, and the sisterly affection with which we treat one another, and how we all come to recreation together, which is so regulated that it helps us to discover mutually our faults and gives us also a little

<sup>1</sup> *Foundations*, c. xiii.

relaxation, in order to observe the Rule in all its rigour. He was so good that I at least might have learnt much more from him than he from me. But I did not do so. I only showed him the way in which the Sisters live.<sup>2</sup>

These few lines give us a picture of the happy days spent by St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross together at the house near Valladolid, which was to be converted into the new convent. The customs of religious communities can scarcely be learned except by experience, and St. John now received, as far as was possible, the traditions of the Convent of St. Joseph at Avila, in order that he might make them the practice among the friars of the Reform.

We may as well finish the story of the new monastery before passing on to that of the foundation of Valladolid. St. Teresa goes on to tell us that she found at Valladolid the Provincial, Fra Alonzo Gonzalez, whose consent was necessary for the monastery.

He was an old man, very kind and without guile. I said so much to him, and of the account he would have to give to God if he hindered so good a work, when I asked him his consent, that he was greatly softened, His Majesty also disposing him thereto, for He would have the monastery founded. Doña Maria de Mendoza arrived, and her brother, the Bishop of Avila, who has always helped and defended us, and they obtained his consent at last, with that of the late Provincial, Fra Angelo de Salazar, from whom I feared every difficulty. But some great and pressing matter occurred at the time, for which the help of that lady, Doña Maria de Mendoza, was needed, and that

<sup>2</sup> *Foundations*, c. xiii]



I believe helped us much. But putting this aside, even if that necessity had not arisen, our Lord would have put it into his heart to consent, as He did into that of the Father General, who was very far from such a thought.<sup>3</sup>

The intervention of the Bishop of Avila was also required for the permission necessary for the new Convent of Valladolid, in which he and his sister were both so much interested. The Bishop sent his secretary and Julian of Avila to obtain the consent of the Vicar-General, who resided at Valladolid, that city not yet being the seat of a bishop. There were difficulties in the way, because in the first place, the convent was to have no endowment, and in the second place, it was outside the walls and at a distance from the town, which was contrary to the provisions of the Council of Trent. While this negotiation was being pressed at Valladolid, Teresa remained at Medina del Campo, where she had full leisure to instruct St. John of the Cross, and where Fra Antonio was making his preparations for the monastery at Durvelo, pending the efforts made to obtain the necessary consent of the two Provincials. But our Lord appeared to Teresa, and urged her to make haste about the foundation at Valladolid, saying that the soul of Don Bernardino was suffering greatly in Purgatory. So she set off as fast as she could, and arrived at Valladolid on the feast of St. Laurence, August 10, 1568. She had with her Isabella Arias—one of the nuns of the Incarnation, who had come with her to Medina del Campo, and who was now Isabella of Jesus—and Antonia of the

<sup>3</sup> *Foundations*, c. xiii.

Holy Ghost, who had been her inseparable companion in her journeys, as well as Maria of the Cross, one of her four first nuns at St. Joseph's, and two more nuns from the Incarnation, Juliana of St. Magdalene and Maria of the Visitation. Later on, she sent her own niece, Maria Baptist, to join the community, Doña Maria de Mendoza making a special petition for this favour.

When St. Teresa saw her new house for the first time, she was much troubled. The garden was good and fine, but the house was close to the river, and appeared unhealthy. Besides this, it was clear that great expenses would be required to make it habitable for the nuns. She had to go a long way into the town to a Church of the Order to hear Mass. Altogether she was discouraged—but, as usual with her, she kept her trouble to herself and took care to keep up the spirits of her companions. She sent quietly for some workmen, and made some divisions and partitions, that the little party might sleep in peace. The next Sunday was the feast of the Assumption, and the permission of the Vicar-General for the convent had not yet been obtained. But he gave them leave to have Mass said where they were, instead of coming into the city. Mass was said in the hall of the house, which had been prepared for the purpose. Julian of Avila said the Mass. When he came to St. Teresa to give her Holy Communion, he found her in a trance, as was sometimes the case both before and after her Communions. The trance was occasioned by the apparition to her of Don Bernardino, who had given her the house. He

appeared full of joy and glory, his face beaming with happiness, his hands joined, and he thanked her for all that she had done to deliver him from Purgatory. Then he mounted up to Heaven. St. Teresa was overwhelmed with delight. She had not expected that our Lord would fulfil His promise so soon, for as the convent was not yet founded she did not count that Mass as the first Mass. Teresa avows that she had great fears about Don Bernardino, for he had seemed to be so much attached to the things of the world.

Thus the foundation of the new convent was dated from this feast of the Assumption of 1568, although the permission of the Vicar did not come for a few days later. The convent was named after the Conception of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. St. Teresa remained there some time, and suffered herself from the bad air of the place. Meanwhile she was anxious to begin at once the new Monastery of Durvelo. Fra Antonio, she relates, came to see her at Valladolid with great demonstrations of joy at his success in begging for the new foundation. But his great acquisition seems to have been limited to five hour-glasses. He said he was most anxious that the community should be very punctual at all their duties. He does not seem to have thought of anything for them to sleep upon. Want of money kept back this foundation, slight as were its wants, till the Advent Sunday of this year. Then St. John of the Cross and Fra Antonio began their life together. They had two companions—one of these was an old priest of the Order who was unable from

infirmity to keep the austere rule of the Reform. The other, a young religious, persevered long enough to make his profession with Fra Antonio, but afterwards proved inconstant and returned to the Mitigation. Fra Antonio took the name of Antonio de Jesus. St. John took the name by which he has always been known in the Church. Fra Antonio told St. Teresa afterwards, that he had felt great joy on arriving at Durvelo to think that he had at last entirely renounced the world to end his days in solitude, and that the poverty of the house was most agreeable to him and to his companion. St. Teresa here breaks out into one of her beautiful passages against fine buildings and the like. "The more the body is without ease, the more joy has the soul ; what advantage can we derive from great buildings, since we can only use one cell? We are not to spend our time in looking at the walls. What does it matter whether our cell is large and fine? We are to quit these material homes very soon. Let us imitate," she says, "our Blessed Lady and our holy Founder, and if we are not strong enough for everything required by the Rule, let us do as much as we can without destroying our health."<sup>4</sup>

The young man who came with Fra Antonio was called Fra Joseph of Christ. The Provincial came to see the monastery soon after its foundation, and made Fra Antonio Prior, Fra John of the Cross Subprior, and Fra Joseph porter and sacristan. St. Teresa tells us many things of the primitive austerities and simplicity of these good friars. In the course of the

<sup>4</sup> *Foundations*, c. xiv.

next Lent, she was passing one morning on her way to Toledo, and found Fra Antonio sweeping the porch, with a joyful countenance, which was habitual with him. She asked him what had become of his dignity, and he replied that he execrated the time when he had any. The little church was full of crosses and skulls, and moved to devotion not only St. Teresa, but two friends of hers who were with her, merchants from Medina. She speaks especially of a little wooden cross with a paper picture of our Lord upon it. The garret-roof rose in the centre, so that they could well say Office in this original choir, but they had to stoop to enter it. There were two little hermitages filled with hay in the corners next the church, without any space for them to stand in. Each had its little opening into the church, with stones for pillows. After Matins they used to remain in these little receptacles, for prayer, until the time of Prime, and they were so absorbed, that when their habits were covered with snow they did not know it. They used to go out and preach in the neighbouring hamlets, the people of which were in much need of instruction. They would go as far as a league or a league and a half, and at that time went quite barefooted. They would then come home late to their scanty meal, full of joy. The people about took care that they did not starve.

Some noblemen of the neighbourhood came to confession to them, and one of these was Don Luis of Toledo, Lord of Alhanje and of the Five Towns. He had built a church at a place called Mancera, for a picture of our Blessed Lady, to which he had a

very special devotion. It had been sent by his father from Flanders. He was so fond of the picture that, when dying, he sent for it. It was large, St. Teresa tells us, and so beautiful, that she had never seen a finer picture. Fra Antonio went to see it in the church at Mancera, and was so struck with it, that he went off and begged the nobleman to give it him. But Don Luis proposed instead that the monastery at Durvelo should be transferred to Mancera, and Fra Antonio could not resist the temptation. So a little monastery was built adjoining the church at Mancera, and this became for a time the head-quarters of the Reformed Friars. There was a wonderful incident, of which Teresa makes mention, about the supply of water for the monastery. There was no well, and no means of making one, and the friars were in much distress. One day after supper the Prior was talking in the cloister of their need, and he rose up and took the stick he used to carry in his hand, and pointed to a spot, bidding them dig there. They had dug but a very little before a most abundant supply of water burst up, so abundant that it was difficult to drain it off, and there was fear lest its constant flow should injure the foundations of the building. Fra Antonio cried out, "We asked for water, Lord, but not so much," and then the water ceased to flow in such superabundance.

When St. Teresa visited the good friars at Durvelo, she was told by a nobleman and his wife, who came to see her, that nothing could exceed the good done in the villages around by these good Fathers. She begged of them to moderate their

austerities, fearing that the great pains it had cost her to find friars to begin the Reform might be wasted, if they destroyed their health and strength. She tells us that they made light of her advice to give up their penitential practices, and she left them with great consolation. The transfer of the house to Mancera took place in 1570. The Provincial, Fra Alonzo Gonzalez, came himself with a company of friars, and led the procession from Durvelo. But the monastery did not long stay at Mancera, on account of the unhealthiness of the place. It was ultimately transferred to Avila itself. Durvelo became a sort of pilgrimage to the friars, as having been the cradle of the Reform. Many years afterwards the little house was re-purchased, and a community re-established on the spot. The worthy patron of the friars, Don Luis, was rewarded in the way in which many benefactors of the new Carmel found their recompense. His son and daughter entered the new Reform. The daughter was professed in the Convent of Salamanca in 1588, and the son, who received the holy habit in the same place, died holily in Segovia in 1598.

The affairs of the friars at Durvelo have taken us away from the direct line of our history. The Convent of Valladolid, at which we left St. Teresa, was found out to be altogether unfit for the residence of the nuns. They all fell ill, St. Teresa herself, as we have said, among the number. Then Doña Maria de Mendoza, the sister of the founder, Don Bernardino, came forward with an offer which completely met the difficulties of the case. This lady was a rich widow.

Her husband had been the Grand Commendatore Cobos, and her son was Marquis Camarasa. She had known Teresa at Avila on her visits to her brother the Bishop, and she had become one of the firmest friends of the new Carmel. She now proposed that the house at Rio d'Olmos, given to Teresa by Don Bernardino, should be made over to her in exchange for another which she would provide in the city of Valladolid itself. While this new house was being prepared, she received the little community in her own house. The new convent was much better in every way than the house they had abandoned, and the works were finished so quickly that the nuns entered in possession on February 3, 1568. There was a great procession of the people when the nuns went to their new abode. The convent became famous on account of the sanctity of many of the inmates. It is not surprising that Teresa should feel constrained not to refuse to Doña Maria the satisfaction of seeing Maria Baptist established there as Subprioress under Isabella of the Cross. Doña Maria, in addition to the convent and church which she provided, charged herself with the support of the nuns as long as she lived.

We have a few letters written by St. Teresa while staying at Valladolid, and they may well be inserted here, before we proceed to the new enterprise which took her away from that city. The first is to her old friend, Don Francisco de Salcedo, who seems to have been in the habit of supplying the convent at Avila with fruit and vegetables from his own garden. The letter is written to recommend to him no less



a person than St. John of the Cross, and must have been sent before the actual foundation of the Monastery of Durvelo. It is interesting, on account of the sportive, and at the same time affectionate, manner in which St. Teresa speaks to her old friend.

LETTER IX.—*To Don Francisco de Salcedo of Avila.*

Valladolid, September, 1568.

JESUS

be always with your honour.

Glory be to God that, after having written seven or eight letters of indispensable business, I have a moment left to refresh myself by writing these lines, that your honour may know that it is a real joy to me to get all your letters. Do not think that it is lost time to write to me. I have great need of it, but always on condition that you do not repeat so often that you are old. That pains me all over—as if there was any certainty of life for young people! I hope that God will preserve you until I myself die, for then, that I may not be without you, I must try that our Lord may call you to Him as soon as possible.

Pray be so kind as to talk to this Father, and do all in your power to befriend him in the matter in question. Though he is small in stature, I consider that he is great in the sight of God. We shall feel his absence here much, for he is judicious and just fitted for our manner of life, and I believe that our Lord has called him to it. There is not one of the friars who does not speak well of him, for that he has practised great penances all his life, though he is young. It seems that our Lord holds him by the hand, for though, in the midst of all our business here, we have had more than one occasion of trial, and though I have myself put him to the proof by scolding him sometimes, we have never seen an imperfection in him. He is

courageous, and he needs, most certainly, all the gifts with which our Lord has endowed his soul, to go alone, as he is doing. He will tell you how we are getting on here.

I think it no little thing, the six ducats that you say that you would give to come and see me. I think it a great deal! But then, what would I not give to have the pleasure of seeing you? In sooth, you are worth more than I am. What is a poor nun who owns nothing? Of what importance is she? A gentleman who sends us delicious drink and dainties, who can also give us radishes and lettuces from his garden, and when he brings us apples will employ no other servant but himself, ought to be held in somewhat high estimation. Speaking of drinks, they say that there is a delicious one to be had here, but, Don Francisco de Salcedo not being at hand, we know nothing of its taste, and are without hope of knowing it.

I am telling Antonia to write to you, seeing that I cannot do so more at length. May God be with you! I kiss the hand of my dear Doña Mencia, of yourself, and the good lady Ospedal.

May it please God to increase the improvement in health of this bridegroom of yours. Do not be so incredulous. Prayer can do everything, and I hope that his relationship to yourself may do a good deal. Here we shall help with our poor little power. May our Lord do it, as He can. Would you believe it? The illness of his spouse appears to me the more incurable of the two. Nothing, however, is impossible to God.

Maria Diaz, the Flemish lady, and Maria d'Avila, I beg you to tell to commend me to God, and also this foundation. May it please God to preserve you many years. Amen. Perhaps this one may not pass without my seeing you again, after the affair of the Princess of Eboli.

Your unworthy but true servant,

TERESA DE JESUS.

P.S.—Once more I beg you as an alms to talk to Father John of the Cross, and to advise him what you consider suitable to his manner of life. The spirit which our Lord has given him encourages me much, and the virtue that he has displayed on different occasions; it makes me think that we are beginning well. He is a man of great prayer and a very sound understanding. May our Lord vouchsafe to lead him on and on.

The good Caballero had evidently written to say that he would give six ducats to see St. Teresa. She replies that she would give a great deal more, and goes on joking him about his presents to the nuns. Doña Mencia was the wife of Don Francisco. The Señora Ospedal was an old and valued servant in his household, so much respected by all that she was called Señora. The paragraph about the two invalids, apparently a gentleman and lady espoused to one another, must be an answer to Don Francisco's request for prayers. We have some knowledge of the other persons mentioned in the letter. Maria Diaz is well known to all the readers of Father de la Puente's *Life of Father Balthasar Alvarez*. The lady from Flanders was Doña Anna Wastels, the wife of Don Matias de Guzman. She ended her life in religion as Mother Anna of St. Peter. Maria de Avila was her daughter. It is said that she had a sister at St. Joseph's, Anne of the Angels, who desired that she also should enter religion. St. Teresa told her that Doña Maria would marry, that her two children would become religious, and that she herself would end her life as a nun, but not in the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. All

came true—Doña Maria was left a widow, her son and daughter entered religion, and she herself became a Franciscan nun at León. The last sentence of the letter is remarkable, as giving the first hint of the desire of the Princess of Eboli for the foundation of Pastrana, of which we shall soon hear more.

The next letter is written to Teresa's dear friend, Doña Luisa, who had returned from her journey into the foreign parts of Andalusia. It expresses St. Teresa's joy at the letter which she had received from Master Juan of Avila, of which we have already given an account.

LETTER X.—*To Doña Luisa de la Cerda, at Toledo.*

Valladolid, November 2.

JESUS

be with you, my lady, and my friend,  
—even if my dear lady, Doña Luisa, were to go to the end of the world she would still be that. I have told Antonia to write to you touching all that goes on, my own poor health, and the rest, for with the state of my head, God knows how I shall ever manage to scrawl these lines. But the news of your safe arrival, and that of all my good masters, has given me so much consolation that it is not to be wondered at if I have made some little exertion. It is another most lively consolation for me that you are pleased with your convent. And indeed you have every reason to be so, for I know that our Lord is very truly served there. May He grant that they may serve your ladyship as they ought, and may He preserve you to me, and grant me to see you again before I die!

As to the book, your ladyship has managed it so well it could not have been better. So I have forgotten all the

trouble it caused me. The Master Avila writes to me at length; he is pleased with it all, only he says that certain things must be more developed, and some expressions changed. That is easy. Your ladyship has done a good work. Our Lord will repay you for it, as well as for all the other kindnesses and all the good offices that you have done me. I am enchanted at the successful issue of this business. It is very important. This shows from Whom came the counsel to send the book.

I should much like to write to my dear Father Paul Hernandez, but indeed I cannot. I shall do him a greater service, I think, by not making myself ill. Pray tell him all that is going on here, so that he may commend me to our Lord, as well as all our affairs; for this is what I do for him. I also beg of you to send Sister Antonia's letter to the Prioress of Malagon, if you are sending. If not, pray bid her not to go on with the affair about which I wrote to her by Michael, for the General has written to me again, and it seems that things will go on better. Your ladyship will see that it is very important to give her this message.

I kiss the hands of Señor Don Juan, and all the gentlemen, and yours. How glad I am at your safe return. Say a thousand things from me to Don Fernan, to Doña Anna Maria, to Alfonso de Cabria and Alvaro de Lugo. Your ladyship knows already that with me you must come down from your high position, and raise yourself by humility. May it please our Lord to grant me to see you again! I am already longing for it. I am better as to health and everything else when I am in your parts than I am here.

As to the moving the convent, it is very important to choose a healthy site, for you see what we suffer here from the want of healthiness in this house, otherwise so delightful.

I am charmed that you should do this almsdeeds to the young lady of whom you speak. If you send her, there is no question as to finding a home for her, the convent is

all yours. Señora Doña Maria de Mendoza kisses your hand many times. Before I had read what you desired me to tell her, she had begged me much to say this for her ; she is now away. I will tell her faithfully what you desire, and most certainly it is due. You must say to our Father Vicente de Valasquez all that you think well. And now I leave you with God, begging Him to make you all that I wish. Amen.

Your unworthy servant,

TERESA DE JESUS.

To-day is the day after All Saints.

The allusions in this letter are chiefly such as require very little commentary. We have already spoken of the letter of Juan of Avila to St. Teresa. The mention of the possible change of place of the convent at Malagon has also been already anticipated. Teresa was, at the moment of writing, suffering under the insalubrity of the new house at Rio d'Olmos, and she was naturally anxious that the same mistake should not be repeated at Malagon. Doña Luisa seems to have proposed to furnish a postulant at Malagon with the necessary dowry, and Teresa, with her usual grace, tells her that the whole convent is hers. We may thus proceed with the history. We may now pass on to the beginnings of the affair of the foundation at Toledo.

While St. Teresa was at Valladolid, arranging the affairs of the new foundation there, she received a pressing letter from Father Paul Hernandez, of the Society of Jesus, who had been her confessor during her last residence in Toledo, concerning a new foundation which had already been projected in that place.

One of his penitents was a certain Martin Ramirez, a merchant who had never married, and had lived a good, holy life in the world, a man of great integrity and honesty, who had increased his fortune solely for the purpose of spending it in good works. He intended to found some chaplaincies in his parish church, and was, at the time of which we first hear of him, making his dispositions for this, being seriously ill. Father Hernandez, who was just then in that state of devotion to the new Carmel which was usually produced in good people like him when they made the acquaintance of St. Teresa, suggested to Martin Ramirez that he might as well employ his money in the foundation of a Convent of Discalced Carmelite Nuns in a city so great as Toledo, and that he would gain great merit thereby, while the chaplaincies might be founded as well in the church of the convent as in that of the parish. Martin entered heartily into the views of Father Hernandez, but, as he was near his end, he thought it better to put the whole matter into the hands of his brother, Alonzo Alvarez Ramirez, a man of whom St. Teresa bears testimony that he was discreet and God-fearing, given to almsdeeds, and accessible to reason. We shall see presently why Teresa mentions these special qualities. After making this arrangement the good Martin Ramirez died. This was towards the end of the year 1568. Father Paul Hernandez and Alonzo Alvarez Ramirez both urged Teresa to make no delay in coming to Toledo to settle the matter of the foundation. She immediately sent powers to Father Hernandez and the Superior of the College

of the Society at Toledo to act in her name with Alonzo Ramirez. The procuration is dated December 7th, 1568. In the course of a few days she wrote again to Doña Luisa de la Cerda, to obtain for her the necessary permissions from the Council and the representative of the Archbishop, who was the famous Bartholomew Carranza, at that time in confinement at Rome by order of the Pope. In January of the following year, we find her writing to Alonzo Ramirez and his son-in-law, Diego Ortiz, who, according to the arrangement made by Father Hernandez, was to have the nomination of the chaplains who were to serve in the chaplaincies founded with the money of Martin Ramirez. In these letters she mentions that she has to stop on her way at some of the convents already founded, and that she does not expect to be at Toledo before the middle of Lent.

These letters, then, are written after the news of the projected foundation at Toledo had reached St. Teresa. We learn from them, among other things, the date of the transfer of the Convent of Valladolid from Rio d'Olmos to the city, and also the fact of Father Paul Hernandez's removal from the College at Toledo.

LETTER XI.—*To Doña Luisa de la Cerda, at Toledo.*

Valladolid, December 13, 1561.

JESUS

be with your Ladyship !

I have neither time nor strength to write much. Indeed, for very few people I do so with my own hand. It is not long since I wrote to you. My health is altogether gone here; with you and in your parts I am much better,



though the people here do not abhor me, glory be to God, but as my will is where you are, I should like to be there in the body as well.

How does it seem to your ladyship about the way in which our Lord arranges everything to my satisfaction? May His Holy Name be praised, that so it has pleased Him to ordain by the hands of persons who are such servants of His! I believe that, in this case, they will be doing a work which is much to the service of His Majesty. For the love of God, let your ladyship endeavour to obtain the permission. I should advise that my name be not mentioned to the Vicar General Administrator, but that leave is simply asked for a house of Discalced Carmelites, representing the good that they are doing where they are established. At least we can get no refusal if people judge by our house at Malagon, glory be to God. Your ladyship will soon see this poor servant of Jesus arrive, for it does not seem that God intends us to be separated. May His Majesty be pleased to let it be the same in Paradise with all my dear masters in your family, to whose prayers I earnestly commend myself. Write to me some news how you are: you are very lazy about doing me this kindness. The Sisters here all kiss your hands. You can hardly believe all the Indulgences and spiritual graces that we have discovered for the founders of our Order: they are without number. May the Lord be with you.

Your unworthy servant,

TERESA DE JESUS.

To-day is the feast of St. Lucy.

LETTER XII.—*To Diego Ortiz, at Toledo.*

Valladolid, January 9, 1569.

May the Holy Spirit be always in the soul of your honour, and give you His holy love and fear! Amen.

Doctor Paul Hernandez has sent me word of the

goodness and charity that you are kind enough to do me, in desiring to have a house of this holy Order at Toledo. I believe for certain that our Lord and His glorious Mother, my Patroness and my Queen, have moved your heart to so holy a work, which will be a great source of glory to God, I hope, and a treasury of spiritual blessings to you. May it please Him to do this, as I and all our Sisters pray, and henceforth the whole Order will pray for you. This news has given me great consolation, and I long to know you, sir, so that I may offer myself in person to be your servant, and for such your honour must reckon me from this time forward.

God has been so good as to take away my fever. I shall make as much haste as I can to leave this house as I wish it to be, and with the grace of God it will be done shortly. I promise your honour, sir, that I will not lose a moment, nor make any account of my ill-health, even though the fever should come back, so as to delay my coming to you. Since you are doing all this for God, it is right that I too should do my part, which is nothing, by taking, at least, a little trouble. We cannot wish for aught else but suffering, we who pretend to follow in the steps of Him Who passed His whole life in suffering without having deserved it.

I do not count on gaining in one way alone by this business, since, according to what my good Father Paul Hernandez writes to me of your honour, it will be greatly to my advantage to know you. It is through prayer that I have been supported until now, therefore I ask you, for the love of God, not to forget me in yours.

It seems to me, if His Majesty does not order otherwise, I shall be at Toledo, at the latest, towards the third week in Lent. I am going to see the convents which it has pleased God to allow to be established during the last few years, and, though I shall leave this soon, I shall remain

some days at each, for as short a time as possible, since your honour so desires my arrival. Everything, however, is so well arranged, and already, indeed, furnished by you, that I have little more to do than to look on and thank our Lord. May His Majesty bear you always in His hand; may He give you life and health with increase of grace, as I ask Him for you. Amen.

Your honour's unworthy servant,

TERESA DE JESUS.

It is to-day the 9th of January.

LETTER XIII.—*To Alonzo Ramirez, at Toledo.*

Valladolid, February 9, 1569.

May the Holy Spirit be with your honour, and requite you for the consolation that your letter gave me. It came at a very convenient time, as I was in much trouble to find a messenger to give you some account of me, as it is only reasonable that I should not fail to do. I shall be a little later than I stated in my former letter, though I may say to your honour that I am not losing an hour. I have not been a fortnight yet in our new convent, since we passed to this house. We came there with great solemnity and devotion. May our Lord be praised for it all!

Since Wednesday I have been with Doña Maria de Mendoza, to whom I had something to communicate, but who could not see me sooner because she was ill. I reckoned on not spending more than one day here, but there has been such severe frost, and snow and ice, that it seemed out of the question to travel, and I remained with this lady till to-day, Saturday. I shall start on Monday without fail, please God, for Medina, and there, and in St. Joseph of Avila, however I may hurry, I shall stay a fortnight, because I have some business to settle in both places, and so I think I shall be later than I said. Your

honour will forgive me. From the account I have given you, you will perceive that I cannot do otherwise. The delay is not great. I entreat your honour to defer the purchase of the house until my arrival. As it is your gift to us, and that of your brother—may he be in glory!—I desire very much it may be suitable to our purpose.

With regard to the permissions, I hope, with the help of Heaven, that I shall get the King's easily, even if there should be some trouble, for I know by experience how the devil cannot abide these houses, and that he will persecute us. But God can do it all, and the devil has to go away with his hands on his head.<sup>5</sup> We have had here to undergo great opposition, and from some of the most influential people of the town, but all has been smoothed.

Let not your honour think that you are to give our Lord only what you now intend, without much more. The manner in which His Majesty rewards good works is by disposing things in such a way that we are enabled to do even greater ones. To give money is nothing, that does not hurt us, surely; but should the time come when we, you, your son-in-law, and all of us who are concerned in this business, are on the point of being pelted with stones, as nearly happened to us at the time of the foundation of St. Joseph of Avila, oh! then the matter will go well, and, if this does happen, I am convinced that, far from losing by it, we that have to undergo this shall gain very much for the new convent as well as for ourselves. May God direct all things in the way which He thinks best. Let not your honour be anxious. My good Father Paul Hernandez has failed me; if we want him, we will get him to come. In short, the devil is beginning already. God be praised, if we do not fail Him, He will not fail us!

In truth, I wish extremely to see your honour, it will be a great consolation for me, and I shall then thank you

<sup>5</sup> "Con las manos en la cabeza."

by word of mouth for all the kind things which you say in your letter. I pray it please our Lord that I may find you well, you and your son-in-law, and I commend myself to the prayers of you both. Consider how I need them, whilst I am obliged to take these journeys with my poor health, though the fever has not returned. I will take care, and I do take care, of what you bid me, and all the Sisters will do the same. They all commend themselves to your prayers. May our Lord have you always in His hand. Amen.

Your unworthy servant,

TERESA DE JESUS.

P.S.—I ask your honour out of charity to send the enclosed to my good lady Doña Luisa, with many messages from me. I need not write to Señor Diego de Avila. I beg of your honour to tell him how I am, and that I hope in the Lord to see him soon. Do not be troubled about the permissions. I hope in our Lord that all that business will go very well.

Teresa quitted Valladolid on the 21st of February, the Monday after Quinquagesima Sunday. She spent the time from that day to the 15th of March between Medina del Campo, Durvelo, and Avila itself. On the 15th, the Tuesday in the middle week of Lent, she left Avila, with Gonzalez de Aranda as her companion priest, and with two nuns for the foundation, Isabella of St. Dominic and Isabella of St. Paul, both of them religious of St. Joseph's at Avila. That first night they had got no further than Tiemblo, the place already mentioned as the scene of the interview between St. Peter of Alcantara and the Bishop of Avila, in consequence of which the Bishop had accepted the foundation of St. Joseph's under his

own jurisdiction. They were lodged in a room which, as it turned out, had already been hired by another traveller, and he came in and was very angry at the mistake. The magistrate of the place, recognizing Gonzalez de Aranda, interfered on behalf of the nuns, and the room was left to them in peace. Teresa passed through Madrid again on this occasion, and paid a short visit to the Princess Juana, sister of Philip II., at her Franciscan convent. She is said to have left with the Princess some words of advice to the King, which pleased him so much that he asked to have Teresa presented to him, but she was already on her way to Toledo. She arrived there on the eve of the Annunciation, March 24, 1569, and took up her abode for the time in the palace of Doña Luisa de la Cerda, where a separate apartment was prepared, in which she and her nuns could live according to their Rule. Teresa had not been long at Toledo before she heard some bad news about her friend Doña Maria de Mendoza, and wrote her, in consequence, the following affectionate letter :

LETTER XIV.—*To Doña Maria de Mendoza, sister to the Bishop of Avila.*

Toledo, 1569 (in Holy Week).

JESUS.

May the Holy Spirit be with your Ladyship.

I have gone on this journey with a very heavy heart. I feel going away very much, and besides, I have a letter from his lordship the Bishop, saying that a great sorrow had befallen you—he does not tell me what. If it had not been the eve of my departure, I declare that I would not have gone away with all this trouble. At any rate, I commended

you very fervently to our Lord. It came into my mind, I do not know why, that perhaps it was something that the administrator had done against the Lady Abbess. This thought consoled me a little. If God permits her to suffer exterior crosses, it is doubtless in order that she may acquire greater riches for her soul. May it please His Majesty to arrange it all, as I implore Him.

They tell me that you are much better, and that gives me the greatest pleasure. Ah! if your ladyship had an interior domain as much under your control as the exterior domain which you possess, what little account you would make of the so-called troubles of this world! What I dread is that they will injure your health. As messengers for this part do not fail you, I beseech your ladyship to let me know all particulars about yourself, for I am very anxious. I arrived here in good health on the eve of our Lady's feast, to the great joy of Doña Luisa de la Cerda. We spend many moments talking of you, which gives me not a little pleasure; and as she, too, is very fond of you, she is never tired of such talk.

I tell your ladyship that you have acquired so good a name here, that we can only wish our Lord to make your works answer to it. They are for ever calling you a saint, and are always singing your praises. Blessed be our Lord that they have had such an example under their eyes! But would you like to know how you might edify them further? By accepting from your heart great sorrows. Our Lord is now beginning with them, and it would be well that the fire of His love which He has kindled in your heart may be communicated to others. Courage, therefore! Consider what our Lord suffered at this holy time. Life is short: there is but a little space left for us to suffer. O my Jesus! how I offer up now the grief of being so far from you, and of not being able to get news of your health as I should like!

My founders in this place are very well disposed. We are setting about the getting of the license. I do not wish to lose an instant. If it is granted without delay, I believe that all will go very well. Say many things for me to my dear Doña Beatrix and to the Countesses. My heart is full of my angel Doña Eleanor. May our Lord make her to be one of His servants! I beg your ladyship to give my compliments to the Father Prior of St. Paul and to the Father Preposito. The Provincial of the Dominicans is preaching here: he is very popular, and with good reason. I have not yet spoken to him. May our Lord have your ladyship in His hand, and keep you for me during many years! Amen.

Your unworthy servant and subject,

TERESA DE JESUS,

Carmelite.

The beginnings of the new foundation seemed likely to encounter the most serious difficulties. These difficulties came from all sides. In the first place, Diego Ortiz, the son-in-law of Alonzo Ramirez, was inclined to put conditions on Teresa, as to the foundations of the chaplaincies, which she could not accept. It ended for the time in an absolute breach between the two parties. Then there were fresh troubles from the administrator of the diocese, Don Gomez Giron, and others, again, from the Council which seems to have represented the municipality. Don Pedro Manriquez, a canon of the Cathedral Chapter, and a man of high birth and much consideration, interceded with the administrator, but for the time without success. This opposition to the convent, on the part of persons of authority, was more painful to Teresa than the simple difficulty of finding



a house, but this also was very great. A friend who had undertaken to find a house which might hold the community until the convent was procured, Alonzo de Avila, fell ill just as St. Teresa was in the greatest need of his help. But she did not despair. After the breach with the family of Martin Ramirez, she said, in her pleasant way, that now that they had got rid of the little idol, money, they should make a better bargain.

The first difficulty to be overcome was that on the part of the administrator of the diocese. Teresa resolved to speak for herself—somehow people always gave way to her. “So I resolved,” she says, “to speak with the administrator, and went to a church near his house, and sent to ask him to have the goodness to speak to me. It was now more than two months since we had begun to labour at this, and matters were every day becoming worse. I told him, when I saw him, that it was a hard thing there should be women desirous of living in great austerity, perfection, and retirement, while persons who did nothing of the kind, but lived at their ease, wished to hinder the doing of these things, which are for the service of our Lord. I said this to him, and much more besides, with a certain firmness of purpose, with which our Lord inspired me.” We should like here again to have the account of an eye-witness—it seems that St. Teresa had with her Isabella of St. Dominic. “His heart was so touched,” she adds, “that he gave me permission before I left him. I came away very happy; I thought I had everything, while I had nothing, for all the money I had may have been

three or four ducats. With these I bought two pictures on canvas, because I had no picture whatever to set on the altar, two straw mattresses, and a blanket.”<sup>6</sup>

But the leave of the administrator did not make the finding of a house more easy. Search had been made everywhere by Teresa's rich friends and ecclesiastical helpers, but to no avail. Then occurred one of those pretty incidents of which the history of these foundations is so full. Some time before the inopportune illness of Alonzo de Avila, a worthy Franciscan friar had passed some days in Toledo, and had sent to Teresa a young man named Andrada, whose confessions he had been accustomed to hear. He was a poor student, apparently, a simple plain fellow, not the sort of person, St. Teresa says, to converse much with Discalced Carmelites. However, the friar begged Andrada to do whatever he could for the Mother from Avila, and he came one day to Teresa in church and promised to use all his efforts in her service, but he said he had nothing to help her with but his own person. The simple offer caused some amusement to Teresa and her companions. However, when she found herself in possession of the leave of the administrator to found her house, she bethought herself of this good young man, and spoke to her companions about employing him. Again they laughed, but he was sent for, and the difficulty in which the nuns found themselves was confided to him. Teresa asked him to find a house for them, and said she would provide the rent. Alonzo de

<sup>6</sup> *Foundations*, c. xv. 5, 6.

Avila had promised to be her security. Andrada went off as if it was the easiest task in the world. The next morning he came to Teresa as she was hearing Mass in the church of the Society. He had found a house, and had the keys in his pocket. They might go and see it at once. It was good enough to serve the community for a year, and the removal could be made at once. Andrada was very much surprised when, on his telling St. Teresa that she might enter on immediate possession, and send in her furniture that very day, she replied that there were only two straw mattresses and a blanket to send.

“My companions,” says St. Teresa, “were vexed at my saying this, and asked me how I could do it, for if he saw we were so poor he would not help us. I did not think of that, and he did not think of it either, for He Who had given him that good-will, would continue it to him till he finished his work. And so it was, for he set about arranging the house and bringing in workmen so earnestly, that I do not think we were more in earnest than he. We borrowed what was necessary for saying Mass, and at nightfall, with a workman, went to take possession, having with us a little bell, one of those rung at the Elevation, for we had no other, and spent the whole of that night in great fear, clearing the house.” They were in alarm, because the room which they intended for the church of the convent was only accessible from without, through another house which was inhabited by some women, though the mistress of the house had let it to St. Teresa and her companions. They had said nothing to these women, lest they should make the

arrival of the nuns known before the convent had been formally opened. But as the dawn drew on, it was necessary to open a little door in the wall, and this alarmed the women. They heard the noise, and arose in terror. "We had a great deal of trouble in soothing them, and the time was come for saying Mass. Though they were violent, they did us no harm, and when they saw what it was for, our Lord made them quiet." Another source of trouble was the fact that the owner of the house soon found out that it was turned into a church, and as the estate was entailed, the noise she made was great. Again she was pacified. "When she saw we would give a good price for it if it suited us, our Lord was pleased that she should be quiet."<sup>7</sup>

Then there came fresh disturbance from the Council. The leave obtained from the administrator had not been shown to them, and they were all on fire with anger. They sent an order after some days for the cessation of Mass, until the license under which the nuns were acting was produced. The good administrator had gone off into the country, and a friend of Teresa to whom application was first made knew nothing about the matter. When the order for the production of the faculties came, Teresa answered very gently that she was not obliged to obey them, but that she would do as she was asked. Don Pedro Manriquez took the faculties and showed them. The Council were brought over, like every one else, but Teresa says that if the thing had not been already done, there would have been trouble.

<sup>7</sup> *Foundations*, c. xv. 10, 11.

Curiously enough, considering how many friends Teresa had in Toledo, and that one of them was the rich and devout lady, Luisa de la Cerda, the nuns, after their first entrance on their new property, suffered extremely from hunger and want of every kind. "On the first day," says St. Teresa, "we had not so much as a dry leaf to dress a pilchard with." But some one put a faggot of wood into the church, and with this they warmed themselves, for although it was the middle of May it was very cold at night, and the Sisters suffered much. It is related that one night St. Teresa herself complained of the cold, though her companions had, without telling her, put over her all their cloaks. They told her, laughing, that she had already all the coverings in the house upon her. She speaks beautifully of those first days of their suffering, as of a time very precious which soon passed away. Alonzo Ramirez became once more ready to enter into negotiations with Teresa, and others also came to their aid. One day, she says, the Sisters seemed sad, and she asked them the reason. They said, How could they help it, since they were no longer poor? This experience taught her to be very fond indeed of actual poverty. "The privation of all things begets," she says, "a tranquillity in the soul which seems to need nothing."<sup>8</sup>

She sent to Avila, as usual, for nuns for this foundation, and as many as four came from her old Convent of the Incarnation. But of these four, only one remained, Anne Juana of the Holy Ghost, whose family name was Hiera, and whose sister, Catalina,

<sup>8</sup> *Foundations*, c. xv. 15.

did not persevere. Two others, Anne of Jesus and Isabella of St. Joseph, came from the lately founded house at Malagon. The reason assigned for the failure of the three from the Incarnation, is the great poverty and hardships of the new house. It would seem therefore that these lasted at least some little time. It seems that Teresa had agreed with the administrator to found the convent with some endowment. The family of Martin Ramirez, with whom the contract, which had been broken off, was afterwards renewed, appeared to some of St. Teresa's friends not to be sufficiently noble for the rights which were to be conceded to them ; and this observation made some impression on St. Teresa herself, as it was quite probable that, in a city like Toledo, she would soon find other benefactors. But our Lord reproved her, saying : "What are birth and dignities before the judgment-seat of God?" It ended by the chancel being granted to the family, and the rest of the convent being entirely free. They enabled Teresa to purchase a very good house, one of the best in Toledo, for the sum of twelve thousand ducats, and the church was so frequented by the people, there were so many Masses said in it, and festivals kept, that the nuns derived continual joy from it.

St. Teresa gave the habit to two novices before she left Toledo, and the number of the community was thus raised to seven. The defection of the religious of the Incarnation, of which mention has been made, probably suggested the new rule, on which Teresa henceforth insisted as far as was possible, not to admit to her convents nuns of other rules than her

own. In the course of the next year the Convent of Toledo received a novice who became conspicuous in the new Carmel, and who was known by the name of Anne of the Mother of God. She was forty years of age, a rich widow, who had lost her husband when she was only twenty. She had lived all her life in the practice of religious observances, prayer, and good works ; but she had never had good health. In the convent, where she kept the Rule and practised the most severe penance, she found nothing to suffer on that score. She was so full of devotion when she came to enter the convent, that she must needs give all her property, which was large, to the convent as an alms. Teresa naturally objected to this, and told her that she could not feel sure that she should ever admit her to profession. She said that, in that case, she should ask alms for the love of God—but that in the meanwhile her property must belong to the convent. The name of this fervent soul in the world was Doña Anne de la Palma.

St. Teresa has a chapter in her book of the Foundations especially devoted to the virtues practised in this new convent. She speaks of the wonderful obedience of the nuns, which made it necessary for the Superiors to be most careful in giving, or seeming to give, orders to do impossible or dangerous things. One of the nuns jumped into a pond, because the Prioress looked at her and said : “What will happen if I tell her to throw herself in?” And another was nearly throwing herself into a well for similar words. It was in the same convent that Teresa had a vision which greatly consoled her, as to the happy deaths

of those who died in her convents. A Sister, Petronilla of St. Andrew, was very ill, and after receiving the last sacraments she was so full of joy and peace, that the others were able to speak to her as if she were already a saint in Heaven, and ask her to recommend them to God and to their patron saints. St. Teresa went to her shortly before she died, after having been praying for her before the Blessed Sacrament. She saw our Lord standing at the head of the bed in which the nun lay, with His arms extended as if to protect her. He told her that He would so protect all who died in those convents, and that they were not to fear temptations at the hour of death. After this, she observed the same great peace and serenity in other nuns who died in the same way, and became confident in the fulfilment of our Lord's promise.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### *Pastrana, Salamanca, and Alba de Tormes.*

THE circumstances under which the beginning had been made at Toledo, the opposition which the convent had met with, the poverty it had to endure, and the other difficulties attending all new foundations, made St. Teresa very desirous to remain for a considerable time with the infant community. But it was not so to be. The final arrangements of the temporary house, which was occupied by the nuns for a full year, were just made, about a fortnight after the first entrance, when a fresh summons came which Teresa was obliged to attend to. It was the eve of Pentecost, and she was thinking that she might enjoy the great festival in peace, when a gentleman came to her with a letter from a very great personage, the well-known Princess of Eboli, wife of Ruy Gomez de la Silva. It had been agreed some time before this, that Teresa should found a convent of her nuns at Pastrana, the place from which the Prince of Eboli took his title of Duke. But she did not think it would be so soon. She told the messenger of the Princess that it was impossible. The message which he brought was to say that she was to come to Pastrana immediately, as the Princess wished to begin the affair at once. Teresa replied that she could not

leave Toledo now. The gentleman was displeased, and said the Princess would be offended, as she had already started for Pastrana for no other purpose but this. Nevertheless, Teresa would not leave her nuns at present. She went before the Blessed Sacrament and implored our Lord to guide her pen that she might write to the Princess a letter of refusal which would not give offence. It was just then very important that she and her Reform should have the powerful support at Court of Ruy Gomez. The foundations were beginning to attract attention, and especially the foundations of friars, lately begun at Durvelo, might very possibly meet with great opposition.

Our Lord told her that she was to go without fail, for she was wanted for something more than that single foundation, and she was to take with her the Rule and the Constitutions. On this she sent to beg her confessor to come to her. She did not tell him what had passed in her prayer, but she implored our Lord to give him light to guide her to whatever was pleasing to His Divine Majesty. This was always her way when consulting her confessors, after having had a vision. Her confessor was of opinion that she should go to Pastrana, and she accordingly set out on the Monday following, with two companions, Isabella of St. Paul, and Antonia del Aguila who was from the Convent of the Incarnation.

St. Teresa was to pass through Madrid on her way to Pastrana, and she went, as before, to lodge in the Convent of the Discalced Franciscan Nuns, of which mention has already been made. Doña

Eleanor de Mascareñas, her friend, was residing there, and she spoke to Teresa of a hermit who was very desirous to see her. He was one of a small company of hermits who were living in a kind of community, but were now in some difficulty on account of the rule lately made by St. Pius V., ordering all hermits to be subject to some Regular Order. "He was an Italian by birth," she tells us, "a man of very great abilities and skill, and a doctor," that is, he had taken the degree of Doctor of Laws. His name was Ambrogio Mariano Azaro, and he was born at Bitonto in the kingdom of Naples. His parents were noble. He had been schoolfellow of Pope Gregory XIII., who always retained his regard for him. He had been sent to the Council of Trent, and employed in many important affairs in Flanders and Germany. After this he entered the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. All his life he had been very pure and had disliked the society of women. He had been put in charge of a young Spanish Prince, the Prince de Salmona, and while in Spain he had become fully converted to religion and contempt of the world. He made the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius at Cordova, and would have joined the Society but that he had an attraction for choir, and this could not be satisfied in the Society. A chance visit of a venerable Basilian hermit, Fra Mateo de la Fuente, to the church, attracted his attention, and this led to his joining Father Mateo's little community. Father Mateo was a disciple of Juan of Avila, and had begun an eremitical life in the neighbourhood of Cordova, but had retired to the Sierra

Morena to avoid the people who came to him. Juan of Avila bade him take some companions with him, and they went to a desert part called Cardon, from the wild artichokes which grew there, and it was soon peopled with hermits. The name was changed to Tardon. They lived each in his own cell, meeting together in an oratory for Mass, without any revenues, not accepting alms, but supporting themselves by the work of their hands.

St. Teresa tells us much of Father Mariano's virtues. "He had to undergo some trouble, for the death of a certain person was laid to his charge. Kept in prison for two years, he would not allow a lawyer or any other to defend him, but only God and His justice. There were witnesses who said that he had asked them to commit the murder. As it happened to the old man who accused Susanna, so it did to these, for being each of them severally questioned where Mariano was at the time, one said that he was sitting on his bed, another that he was at the window. And at last they confessed that the accusation was a falsehood. He told me that it cost him a great sum to set these witnesses free without being punished, and that the very man who had caused him all that trouble fell into his hands, that he had to proceed judicially against him, but that he had stretched his power to the utmost not to do him any harm."<sup>1</sup>

Mariano had with him a companion, called Juan de la Miseria, who had known him in old days in Italy, and was now also one of the hermits of the

<sup>1</sup> *Foundations*, c. xvii. 6.

Tardon. His name had been Giovanni de' Narducci, and he, too, was a native of the kingdom of Naples. They were both, it seems, thinking of going to Rome, to seek for leave to continue the kind of life they had begun. But St. Teresa spoke to Mariano of the primitive rule of Mount Carmel, and showed him the Rule and the Constitutions. She said he might do all that he wanted to do in following that Rule. He promised to think of it for that night. We may well suppose that he was not the only one of the two who spent many hours in prayer on that occasion. In the morning he came to Teresa to say that his mind was made up to do as she suggested, and he could not refrain from expressing his surprise at the change he found in himself, which, he said, had moreover been brought about by a woman.

He was a recruit worth gaining, and Teresa began to understand what was meant when she had been told that she was to go to Pastrana for something more than the foundation of a new convent. Juan de la Miseria was ready to do what Father Mariano would do. Mariano also told Teresa that Ruy Gomez, the husband of the lady she was on her way to meet, had given him at Pastrana a place for making a settlement of hermits, and that he would give that place to the Reform of Mount Carmel instead, and take the habit himself. Thus there was a prospect of a new monastery as well as of a new convent. Teresa sent a messenger to the two Provincials, on whose permission the foundation of the monastery was to depend, according to the orders of the General, and she begged Mariano and

Juan to wait till that permission could be got. She also wrote to Don Alvaro de Mendoza, the Bishop of Avila, to help her in obtaining the consent of the two Provincials. As in the case of Durvelo, she expected that they would be hostile, but that, at a little place like Pastrana, they would not make much objection. Then she went on to Pastrana herself, where she was very kindly received by Ruy Gomez and his wife.

The Princess, of whom we shall hear more hereafter, was a capricious, spoilt child of the world, with good instincts and desires, but by far too much accustomed to have her own way in everything. The house which she destined for the convent was small, and considerable repairs and additions were required. Altogether Teresa had to remain at Pastrana three months, "during which," she says, "I had much to endure, because the Princess insisted on certain things unsuitable to our Order, and so, rather than consent to them, I made up my mind to go away without making the foundation. But the Prince, Ruy Gomez, in his good-nature, which is very great, listened to reason and pacified his wife, and I accepted some of her conditions ; for I was more anxious for the foundation of the monastery of the friars than for that of the nuns, seeing how important that was, as I saw afterwards."<sup>2</sup> The difficulties raised by the Princess were of two kinds. In the first place, she desired St. Teresa to accept as a member of the new community, an Augustinian nun, Catalina Machuca, who was to pass to the Carmelites at once.

<sup>2</sup> *Foundations*, c. xvii. 12.

Teresa of course could not allow this. She laid the matter before Father Bañez, who approved of her refusal, and the Princess gave way. She also wished the convent to be unendowed, and to this again St. Teresa objected. Pastrana was a small place, and no one would have given any alms to the convent, because the people would have thought that it was supported by the Princess herself, upon whose changeful character Teresa had already learnt not to rely. In this matter also the Princess had to yield. It seems that she also managed to get hold of the book of St. Teresa's Life, and that though she promised to keep it secret, she talked of it in ridicule and let it lie about, so that her servants read it. This conduct greatly annoyed St. Teresa, and led afterwards to consequences which were by no means pleasant to her. It was in consequence of the foolish talk of the Princess and her servants that the book was denounced to the Holy Office.

At last the wished-for permission came from the two Provincials. The Prince and Princess consented also to make over to the Order the place which he had promised to Father Mariano. St. Teresa set to work to make the habits and cowls for the new friars, and sent for Fra Antonio of Jesus from Mancera to found the monastery. Some nuns also came from Medina del Campo, and they brought with them a well-known Carmelite preacher, Fra Balthasar of Jesus, who afterwards joined the Reform. He it was who gave the habit to Fra Mariano and his companions in the chapel of the Prince, Ruy Gomez, and he preached a most fervent sermon,

one of the fruits of which was the conversion of a young nobleman, who afterwards became a Discalced Carmelite. The monastery was inhabited at once, but the Blessed Sacrament was not placed there till later, when Fra Antonio arrived.

St. Teresa speaks in the highest terms of the virtues of several novices, who, soon after the foundation of the Monastery of Pastrana, joined the rising community of the friars of the Reform. This work was therefore now fairly begun, as well as that of the spread of the Reform by the foundation of convents for nuns. We shall find that ere long the growth of the new Carmel was to be proved by the most certain of all evidences—that of jealousy and opposition. Teresa returned from Pastrana to Toledo, from which place, as we have seen, she had withdrawn with much regret, and where her new convent had much need of her presence and activity. She sent from Toledo Isabella of St. Dominic to be the Prioress of the Convent of Pastrana, as has already been said. Her stay at Toledo, broken only by short absences, now lasted several months, and we have several letters preserved to us which were written at this time from that city. The first of these letters is to a gentleman of Medina del Campo, whose niece, an orphan whom he had brought up with great care, and who possessed a considerable fortune in her own right, had lately entered the convent of the Reform in that place. She had taken with her a companion who had long shared her life of piety and good works in the world, who entered as a lay-sister. We shall hear more of certain troubles which this entrance of a rich heiress



into the poor convent of the Reform seems at once to have created, and it will be seen how considerably St. Teresa speaks on the point to the good uncle, who was in no way a party to the opposition which was raised to the disposal of the fortune of his niece according to her own wishes.

LETTER XV.—*To Simon Ruiz, at Medina del Campo.*

Toledo, October 18, 1569.

JESUS.

May the Holy Spirit be always with your honour.

I have already heard from the Prioress of Medina del Campo, and from others, how well all has been done. Our Lord be for ever praised for it! It has consoled me much, but beyond all, the good news which the Prioress gives me about Sister Isabella of the Angels. May it please our Lord to support her with His hand, and her companion, Sister of St. Francis, too, with whom the nuns are now much pleased.

It is not surprising that a step of this kind should have made some stir, as well as have aroused devotion. For, such is the world, owing to our sins, that amongst those who think to live quietly in it, there are few to be found who take up our Lord's Cross. And yet a much heavier cross awaits them in the world. The news which comes from Medina del Campo, from what I hear, will likewise do us good here. I share your happiness from the bottom of my heart, and that of your wife, Doña Maria, to whose prayers I commend myself.

It is very evident your niece has lived in good company, since she has understood the truth so admirably. As to the rest, it is quite certain that in anything whatever which tends to the service of our Lord, the devil is sure to try his power under the most specious colours. He has bestirred himself not a little here. There is apparently

some foundation for what people say. According to them, large donations made to houses which are to live on alms may, by drying up the source of alms, straiten these houses considerably. That this may be the case for a little while, I agree, but the truth will not be long in coming out. In short, these are serious matters, and cannot be decided hastily. Glory be to our Lord that everything has been done so well! May His Majesty keep your honour, and your wife, for many years, so that you may enjoy the good already done, and may build a home for this Great King, Who, in reward, I hope, will give you one which will have no end!

I have excellent accounts of Father Juan of Montalvo, though I have not received any letter from him since my arrival. I thought that he was at Medina. You have done us a great favour by leaving the matter of the chaplain in such good hands. If the one you speak of has the requisite qualifications, it signifies little that he is young. May our Lord settle this matter as He has done all the rest.

As to what relates to the nuns, you are quite right as to what ought to be. They must receive only two more now, as I have sent word to the Prioress. The number is thirteen, and it will be reached with these two. May His Majesty choose them, and hold your honour always with His hand. Amen. I beg your honour to send these letters to the Mother Prioress, without delay.

The unworthy servant of your honour,

TERESA DE JESUS,  
Carmelite.

October 18, the day on which I received your letter.

The next letter is written about the Christmas of the same year. It is to her sister, Juana de Ahumada—married, as we already know, to Juan de Ovalle. Juana seems to have been tempted to think that her

sister's distinguished position, as it had now become, might enable her to assist the needs of the family at Alba de Tormes with money and material resources. St. Teresa writes to inform her of some more money sent for her by the good Lorenzo de Cepeda from South America, and at the same time, she gently and firmly disabuses her of her expectations of assistance from herself. The other matters mentioned in the letter will sufficiently explain themselves.

LETTER XVI.—*To Juana de Ahumada, at Alba de Tormes.*

Toledo, about Christmas, 1569.

JESUS

be with your honour.

I should be quite wrong to deprive you of the pleasure of hearing from me by not availing myself of such an excellent courier. Blessed be our Lord for what He has just done; may His Majesty go on protecting us in all the rest!

Just see how, though he did not wish it, my brother has been summoned here by important business. Perhaps he may be obliged to make a second journey to receive the money, unless some one can be found to take it to him. He will bring you news of your son. Things are going well with you, and you are happy. May your spiritual progress be as great! Go to confession at Christmas, and commend me to God.

Do you not see that whatever I do, our Lord will not let me be poor? I should indeed be in much trouble about it if it did not make me able to spend a little money without scruple when I have to do any business. I am therefore going to pay for some trifles, which I intend for you, out of what I have received. A part, and indeed the

greater part, will be for the Order, which will have the disposal of it. I shall keep an exact account of all, and in this way when I want to spend something outside the Order I shall be able to do so without scruple. Should any money remain in my hands, it would be impossible for me to keep it, seeing the extreme poverty of the Convent of the Incarnation. And on the other hand, whatever exertions I make, I do not expect to get as much as fifty ducats for what I mentioned to you, as having to be done, not according to my own will, but what is solely for God's service. That is certain. May our Lord support us with His hand, may He make you a saint, and give you a happy Christmas.

These contracts of which your husband tells me, I do not like. He has to be away from home, and to spend more than he gains; he leaves you alone, and keeps all in anxiety. Let us now await what God may do. Try to please Him. He will arrange your affairs Himself. Then, do not forget that everything passes away. Do not fear that your children will fail if they serve His Majesty faithfully. My love to Beatrice. May He have you all in His keeping. Amen.

I must ask one thing of you as a charity. Do not love me for the sake of temporal interests, but that I may commend you to our Lord. Whatever Señor Godínez<sup>3</sup> may say, I shall never meddle in anything of the kind, though it is causing me much pain. I have guides who direct my soul, and not according to every one's ideas. I tell you, that you may know how to answer those who say anything to you about it. I wish you to understand that as the world now goes, and in the state which our Lord has placed me, the less it is thought that I do anything for you, the better it is for me, and so it suits the service of our Lord. For though what I do is less than nothing, if the least thing is imagined, I am sure that what I hear said of many others would

<sup>3</sup> Godínez was the brother of Juan de Ovalle.

immediately be said of me. This is why I must be ever so much more on my guard just at this time.

Pray believe that I love you very much. It is a real joy to me to be able to do some little thing for you from time to time, when I see that it will give you pleasure. But those who blame me in your presence must understand that all that is given to me belongs solely to my Order and ought to be employed for it alone. And what business is it of theirs? Believe that any one who is so much in the eyes of the world as I am, even in doing what is virtuous, must take great care as to the manner in which it is done. You cannot believe how much pain this gives me, but as I suffer it in order to serve Him, His Majesty will take care for me of you and of all which belongs to you. May He keep you for me! I have been discoursing with you a long time, and they have rung for Matins. It is a certain fact that when I perceive something valuable amongst the things brought by those who enter our convents, I think of you and Beatrice; I have never, however, ventured to take anything, even by paying for it out of my own money.

All yours,

TERESA DE JESUS,

Carmelite.

Another letter, written about the same time, is dated from Valladolid, and relates to the reception into the convent there of a young lady, Isabella de Cordova, about whom there was an objection, on account of her want of fortune enough to supply the usual dowry. It would seem, therefore, that St. Teresa must have paid a short visit to Valladolid about this time.

LETTER XVII.—*To Inez Nieto.*

Valladolid, Dec. 28, 1569.

JESUS.

The grace of the Holy Spirit be with your Ladyship.

Though I have not written before this, your ladyship may be quite certain that I have not forgotten you in my poor prayers before our Lord, and that I am truly rejoiced that you are satisfied. May it please our Lord that you may enjoy many years in His service, and I hope in His Majesty that the trouble you may have may not hinder you in any way as to this. Everything that is called good in this miserable life is itself misery, and it will be a great advantage to your ladyship to have spent the former years of your life in His service, for that will help you to give its true value to everything, and not to esteem things that so soon are to pass away.

Señora Isabella de Cordova has spoken some days ago with the Prioress of this house, who holds her for a great servant of God, and so I also shall endeavour to speak with her. I am told she is a near relative of Señor Alborno, and this was a reason for me to desire her entrance here. But as this house has yet to be established, and as the Señora Doña Maria de Mendoza is founding it, it is necessary that there should be some dowry given with her. As she told me that Señor Alborno had promised to help her to become a nun, I said that I thought it would be a great advantage for her to be a nun here. It is certain that even if I desired to have it otherwise, it could not be, both on account of Señora Doña Maria, and also of the nuns, since the number being so small and there being so many who apply, and the house being, as I say, poor, it would be burthening them not to take those who can help them. She told me that she has a property, but that it is of a kind which cannot be sold. If anything could be

managed as to this, even if she brought less than we might receive with others, I would do all I could, for I certainly desire to serve your ladyship and Señor Albornoz, as I am bound, and I commend myself to his prayers. In my own, miserable as I am, I will do what your ladyship tells me.

May our Lord reward you for the picture. He owes me this favour well. I beg your ladyship to keep it with great care for me, till I ask for it, which will be when I am more settled in some convent than I am at present, that I may enjoy it. Do me the goodness not to forget me in your prayers. And may our Lord give your ladyship all the spiritual good which I ask for you. To-day is the feast of the Innocents.

Your unworthy servant,

TERESA DE JESUS,

Carmelite.

The next letter of this time brings us once more to the worthy Lorenzo de Cepeda, St. Teresa's brother, who has just been mentioned as having sent some money for his sisters and their families. It appears that Lorenzo had now lost his excellent wife and was thinking of coming home to Spain, in great measure for the education of his children. It is seldom that we find St. Teresa so completely at her ease as with this her dearest brother, who was to come to Spain just at a time when he could be extremely useful to her, as he had sent her a present of money before this, just at the moment when it was most opportune for the designs on which she was engaged.

LETTER XVIII.—*To Don Lorenzo de Cepeda, in South America.*

Toledo, January 17, 1570.

JESUS.

May the Holy Spirit be always with your honour. Amen.

I have written to you by four different ways, and by three of them I have also sent a letter to Don Geronimo de Cepeda. And as it is impossible but that some one of these letters have reached you, I shall not answer in this one all that you say in yours. As to the good resolution with which our Lord has inspired you, I will not say more than that I have given His Majesty the best thanks of my heart for it. It seems to me to be very wise, for after all I conclude more or less, from the reasons that you have given me, that you may have others, and I hope in our Lord that it may be much for His honour and for your greater good. In all our houses much and continual prayer is made that, since it is your intention to serve our Lord, His Majesty may bring it well about, and guide you in the way that is best for your own soul, and for those children of yours.

I have already written you word that we have founded six convents of nuns and two of friars, also Discalced of our Order. These go on with great perfection, and as for those of the nuns, they are so like that of St. Joseph of Avila, that they all seem to be one and the same house. It gives me courage to see how truly our Lord is praised in them, and with what purity of soul!

I am now at Toledo. I shall have been here a year on the eve of Our Lady of March. Since then I made a journey to a town of Ruy Gomez, the Prince of Eboli, where a foundation of Reformed Carmelite monks has been made, and another of Carmelite nuns, which are going on very well. I returned here to finish putting the house we



have here into good order, which seems as if it would be a very important one. I have been much better this winter, for the air of this country is excellent. If it was not that you would not find convenience here for the education of your sons, I am sometimes tempted to wish you to settle yourself here, because of the mildness of the climate. But there are places in the territory of Avila where you might find what you want, as many others do. As to my brother, Don Geronimo de Cepeda, I think that if God brings him back to us, he could not do better for his health than come to live here. Everything as pleases His Majesty. I think that my health has not been so good for forty years as it is at present, yet I keep the Rule like the others, and I never eat meat except in cases of great necessity.

I had an attack of quartan fever about a year ago, but I have been better ever since. I was then at Valladolid, occupied about the foundation of one of our convents, and I was half killed by the kindness of Doña Maria de Mendoza, widow of the Secretary of State, Cobos, who loves me much. Thus it is God sends us health when He sees that it is for our good, and when not, sickness. May He be praised in all. I was much distressed about your bad eyes; that sort of thing is extremely troublesome. Glory be to God that they are so much better.

Juan de Ovalle has written to tell you that he had left this for Seville. One of my friends put him in such a good way, that on the very day he arrived there he received the money. The money was brought here, and it will be delivered up at the end of this month of January. An account of the claims that have to be paid was made in my presence. You will find them in this packet. That I was able to do this is not a trifle. I am become such a trafficker and tradeswoman, with all these houses of God and the Order, that I am knowing in everything, and I look upon your affairs as if they were our own, and so am glad to

understand such matters. Before I forget it, Queto's son has died since my last letter. He was very young. Nothing can be counted on in this life. How happy I am every time that I remember how thoroughly you understand this.

When I have finished my business here, I wish very much to return to Avila, because I am still Prioress, and I wish not to vex the Bishop, to whom I, as well as all my Order, owe much. I do not know what God will do with me, and whether I shall not be obliged to go to Salamanca, where they are giving us a house. Though these things tire me a good deal, yet so great is the good done by these houses in the places where they are established, that my conscience is bound to found as many of them as I can. God so pours forth His blessings on my labours, that it gives me courage.

I forgot in my former letters to tell you the facilities that we have at Avila for the good education of young boys. The Jesuits have a College there, where they teach grammar. They urge their scholars to go to confession every week, and make them so virtuous that there is reason to praise our Lord. They teach philosophy as well, and then for theology they go to St. Thomas'. So that without going out of Avila, we have all that can be desired as far as virtues or studies are concerned. The people, too, of the town are so religious that strangers are edified by it. There is much prayer, many confessions, and many seculars besides leading lives of perfection.

The good Francisco de Salcedo is one. You have been very kind to me by sending such a good present to Cepeda. He is for ever expressing his gratitude to me. He is a real saint. I do not think that I am giving him more than his due by calling him so. Old Peter del Peso died a year ago. He had run a good course. Anne de Cepeda<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> She seems to have been an aunt of St. Teresa.

was very grateful for the alms you sent her. She will be quite rich with it, for, as she is a good soul, many people are kind to her. There are many places where she might be put, if it was not for her peculiar disposition. She is not made for companionship. God leads her in that way, and I have never dared to take her in one of our houses. Not that she has not plenty of virtue, but I see that her present way of living is what suits her. I am quite sure that she would not remain with Doña Maria or any one else. I think that she is well as she is. She is a sort of hermit soul with great goodness and much penance.

The son of my sister, Doña Maria, and Don Martin of Guzman is professed and advances in holiness.<sup>5</sup> I have already written you word of the death of Doña Beatrice and her eldest daughter.

Doña Madalena, the youngest child, is in a convent as a boarder. I wish very much that God would call her to religious life. She is as good as she can be. It is many years since I saw her. They have been talking lately of marrying her to a widower of property. I do not know what will come of it.

I have also told you how seasonable was your kindness to my sister. I have always admired her courage and virtue under the affliction and poverty by which God has tried her. Doubtless He means to console her now. For myself, I am in want of nothing. I have more than I want; therefore, out of all the alms you send me, I shall give some to my sister, and I shall employ the remainder in other good works, and all will be for you.

On account of certain scruples which I had, some of the money came very opportunely. For in many of these foundations things are put in my hands, and although I

<sup>5</sup> This son was Juan de Jesus, who had become a Franciscan of the Reform of St. Peter of Alcantara. He is mentioned in another letter presently.

take great care and all is done for the purpose in view, yet I might perhaps give less by way of consideration to the learned men I consult, as I always do in matters of conscience—they are trifles, no doubt, but it was a relief to me to give what you sent me, all the more that it saved me from borrowing, as I well might have done, for money would not have failed. But I like to keep my liberty with these gentlemen, so as to be able to tell them what I think. Indeed, the world is so self-interested, that it gives me a horror of money: so I will not keep any of this for myself. I shall give some of it to the Order, and I shall dispose freely of the rest for the uses that I have just named. Fortunately, I have all sorts of permissions from the Father General and from the Father Provincial for receiving or for changing nuns, or even for assisting one house with the money of others.

People are so blind that I have great credit, I do not quite know why, so much so that they trust me with as much as a thousand or two thousand ducats! So now that I have a horror for money and for business, our Lord wills that I should be occupied about nothing else. This is not a little cross. May it please His Majesty that I may serve Him in this. All will pass away. In very truth, it will be an immense comfort to me having you here. I get so little from all earthly things that perhaps it is our Lord's will to give me this one, and to let us meet and work together for His honour and glory and some good to souls. This is what so much afflicts me—to see so many lost, and your poor Indians cost me no little. May God give them light. There is a great deal of misery everywhere, here as well as out there. I go to many different parts and with a number of people, and, for the most part, all that I can say of them is that we are worse than beasts, since we do not understand the dignity of our soul when we degrade it to such an extent as we do by clinging

to the contemptible things of this world. God give us light!

You can discuss matters with Fra Garcia of Toledo, who is nephew to the Viceroy, and whom I miss here very much for my own affairs. And, indeed, should you have need of anything from the Viceroy, know that he is a very good Christian, and it was a great piece of good fortune that he was willing to go out. I wrote him a letter in one of the covers. I also sent you in each some relics to wear on your journey. I am most anxious that they should have reached you.

I did not think to have written at such length. I hope with all my heart that you understand the mercy which our Lord showed in giving such a beautiful death to the Señora Doña Juana. We have prayed hard to God for her here, and in each of our houses there has been a service for her. I hope in His Majesty that now she needs them no more. Endeavour to overcome your grief. Consider that it is for those most of all who do not believe there is an everlasting life, to grieve so excessively for those who are going to live, leaving behind them the miseries here. I commend myself much to my brother Don Geronimo de Cepeda. Let him consider this letter his also. It is a great joy to me to hear that he is making arrangements to be able to come here some years hence. If it was possible, I should much rather that he did not leave his children behind. If not, let us be united above and help one another here, so as to be for ever together by and by.

To-day is January 17, 1570.

Your unworthy servant,

TERESA DE JESUS,

Carmelite.

Many of your Masses are already said, and the others will be. I have received a nun for nothing. I wished

to give her everything, even her bed, that God may bring you to me in good health, you and your children. Commend me to them. I am receiving another in the same way for Don Geronimo. I receive many so if they are spiritual, and our Lord brings me others whose portions supply all. One who entered at Medina brought eight thousand ducats, and we are on the point of receiving another here who has nine thousand, without our asking anything. So many offer themselves that it is a matter to praise God, for no sooner does any one arrive at the practice of prayer than she desires nothing else, if I may say so, than these convents. We are but thirteen religious in all in a house, and we cannot be many, for our Constitutions forbid us to beg. And we eat only what is brought to the turn, which is more than sufficient. I think it will be a great pleasure to you to see these houses.

The remaining letters of this time need little comment. The first relates to St. Teresa's nephew, Fra Juan de Jesus, as to whom she seems to have been afraid that he was being overworked.

LETTER XIX.—*To Father Fra Antonio de Segura, Guardian of the Discalced Franciscans of the Monastery of Cadahalso.*

Toledo, Lent, 1570.

JESUS.

May the Holy Spirit be with your Reverence, my Father.

I have no business to talk about the little account we are to make of the things of this world, and how far I am from understanding this. I say this, because I could not have thought that your Reverence would so entirely have forgotten Teresa de Jesus, that being so near to us, you could not remember us. For it appears that you have been here quite lately, and yet you did not come to give this house,

which is yours, your blessing. I hear, from Father Julian de Avila, that your Reverence is now Guardian of the Monastery of Cadahalso, so that even if you take no great care about it, you can hear of me sometimes. May it please our Lord that you do not forget me in your prayers, on which condition I would put up with the rest. I do not forget you, miserable as I am.

He tells me also that my nephew will see you, though but in passing. If he has not already gone, I beseech your Reverence to make him write me a long letter, telling me how he is, both interiorly and as to external matters. For, seeing how obedience exercises him in these journeys, he must be either greatly advanced or very much dissipated. May God give him strength, that he may not be treated as I think he might well be for belonging to me. If it is well to gain some favour for him with his Superiors, your Reverence may advise me. You have Doña Maria de Mendoza and others like her, and it would be easy to get him allowed to rest a little, if he wishes it.

If your Reverence has occasion to travel, remember that you must not fail to let us see you in this your house. May our Lord give us all a good journey to Heaven. I am well, and our affairs go on well too, glory be to God. I do not write to Fra Juan de Jesus, because I do not know whether he is with you. May our Lord give him interior strength, for he needs it much—and may He be with your Reverence. Our Father Bartholomew of St. Anne is all this Lent with Señora Doña Luisa, at Paracuellos.

Your Reverence's unworthy servant and daughter,

TERESA DE JESUS,

Carmelite.

The following letter is written to the father of two young ladies who had just been admitted into the convent at Toledo.

LETTER XX.—*To Diego de San Pedro de Palma.*

Toledo, July, 1570.

JESUS.

May the Holy Spirit be always with your honour.

Knowing that our Sisters, your daughters, have long desired the sacred habit of our Lady, and that you were not opposed to it, I have determined to-day to give it to them, seeing the spirit and fervour with which they beg for it, and considering that it will be for the glory of our Lord.

I beg of your honour, for charity's sake, to take this in good part, and to consider the favour which His Majesty has done you, in giving you daughters whom He has chosen for His spouses. They are in great consolation, only they feel the pain which it may be to you. For the love of our Lord, do and say nothing that may disquiet souls so well fitted for this state of life. You and your good wife will find them your comfort here,—more so, perhaps, than in any other place. And you may consider all the inmates of this house as your servants and bedeswomen. May our Lord be always with the soul of your honour, and may He hold you by His hand! Amen.

Your unworthy servant,

TERESA DE JESUS,

Carmelite.

We may next give a series of letters to the founders of the same convent at Toledo, Diego Ortiz, and his father-in-law, Alonzo Ramirez. There seems to have been a question about the obligation of the nuns to sing in the Masses which were from time to time celebrated with music in the church of the convent, which, as has been said above, was



burthened with certain obligations to the family of Ramirez on account of the foundation. How the difficulty was ultimately settled, we do not know, but the whole series gives us a perfect specimen of St. Teresa's extreme courtesy and fortitude, as well as of her great desire not to overburthen the nuns. The references to the family of Diego Ortiz are very characteristic. There seems to have been among them a boy, named Martin after his mother's uncle, with whose property the convent was founded, and he is called by St. Teresa "our patron" on that account.

LETTER XXI.—*To Diego Ortiz.*

Toledo, August, 1570.

JESUS.

May our Lord give to your honour His Divine grace.

I have much desired to see your honour these days past, and so I have sent to beg you to come to me; but as I see your honour does not do me this charity, and that the time of my leaving this is at hand, for I think to go to-morrow, I have wished to tell you what I began to talk about the other day concerning the Masses sung on the Sundays and festivals. As to this,—I have reflected these last days, that I did not attend to it so much when I was speaking to your honour, nor did I think it necessary to discuss it, as the end I had in view was clear enough when the contract was made. But I am told that I ought to make it quite clear.

What I had in view was, that the chaplains should be obliged to sing the Masses on festival-days, for we have that in our Constitutions, but not to oblige the nuns, for by their Rule they may sing or not, and although it is in the Constitutions, it is not a matter of obligation under any sin. See, then, if I ought to oblige them to this. I would not

do so for anything. Nor did you or any one else ask me such a thing, except, as I said, for our own convenience. If any mistake has been made in the contract, it is not reasonable to use force with them as to what is within their own choice, and since they are so willing as to serve your honour, and usually sing the Masses, I beg of your honour that when they are obliged not to do so, they may enjoy their liberty. I write with the hand of another, for which I hope you will forgive me—I am weak from bleedings, and my head is not good for more than this. May our Lord preserve your goodness!

Señor Martin Ramirez delights me much. May our Lord please to make him His servant. And may He keep your honour also, for the help of us all. You will do me a great favour by making it all plain about these Masses of yours. Since they sing almost every day, without being obliged to it, it will be reasonable for your honour to take away this scruple from us, and make these nuns happy, as well as myself, in a matter of so little real importance, since we are all desirous to serve your honour.

Your unworthy servant,

TERESA DE JESUS.

LETTER XXII.—*To Alonzo Ramirez of Toledo.*

Alba de Tormes, February 5, 1571.

JESUS

be with your honour.

If I had as much leisure to write letters as your honour has, I should not take so little care to do so. I do not fail, at all events, to recommend you to our Lord. As I hear from others of your good health, I can put up with your silence. May our Lord keep you, as He well can, and as I desire, and let you and Señor Diego Ortiz, and Señora Francisca Ramirez, enjoy this fine church, as they tell me it now is. May God ever be praised.

I am delighted that our Most Reverend Father General has so wisely settled this matter. He is a wise man and a saint; may God preserve him! His Majesty knows how glad I should be to find myself again in the house at Toledo. I can assure your honour that since I left it not a day has passed without great troubles to me. Two convents are being founded, and this one is the least of the two. Glory be to God! May it please our Lord to be served well in them.

I do not understand why the body of Señor Martin Ramirez—may he be in glory!—is not moved into the church. I wish it, and beg it of our Lord. Let me know, I pray your goodness, the reason of it, and whether what was agreed upon with you is being executed. O Lord! how often have I thought of you in the arrangements which are offered me here, and blessed you too, for if you once said a thing, even in jest, it was a thing done. May our Lord preserve you many years, and allow me to enjoy your company, for certainly I love you in our Lord.

It would be good if Señor Diego Ortiz were to write to me sometimes. If he does not desire it himself, your honour might tell him to do it. I kiss your hands often, and those of Señora Doña Francisca Ramirez, and I commend myself to those little angels of yours. May our Lord preserve them, and especially our worthy patron, and may He hold you by His hand, and give you all the good I ask Him. Amen! To-day is the 5th of February. I forgot to say that my sister and Juan de Ovalle kiss your hands humbly. Juan de Ovalle can never stop saying all he owes to you; what can I do?

The unworthy servant of your honour,

TERESA DE JESUS,

Carmelite.

I say nothing of the great kindness you do to me in being so kind to Isabella of St. Paul. I owe your honour

so much, that I leave it to God to acknowledge it and to repay it. It is a great charity. May our Lord be blessed for all!

Pray tell Señor Diego Ortiz that I beg his honour not to omit to put my lord St. Joseph at the door of the Church.

The next letter refers to the new church built by these benefactors. There is a story of a child who came into it one day, and cried out, "Blessed be God, how beautiful this is!" This was told to Teresa, and she told the nuns that that single action of praise of God in the mouth of a little angel made her count as well spent all the trouble which the foundation had cost her.

LETTER XXIV.—*To Diego Ortiz.*

Salamanca, March 29, 1571.

JESUS.

May the Holy Spirit be always in the soul of your honour, and repay you the charity you have been so good as to do me by your letter. It would not be lost time for you to write to me often, for so we might be helped to advance much in the service of our Lord. His Majesty knows how desirous I am to be with you, and I am very anxious to buy a house here, which is no small affair, though there are many here which are not so dear. So I hope in our Lord that I shall get the business done soon. I should soon finish if I could, and it would be a true consolation to me to see Señor Alonzo Ramirez. I kiss his hands, and those of Señora Doña Francisca Ramirez.

It is impossible but that you must be greatly consoled about the church you have built, for here I receive great joy from what I am told about it. May our Lord allow you many years to enjoy what is of so great service to Him, as I entreat Him to do. You should let His Majesty act, and not be in too great a hurry to see it entirely finished,

for He has done us a great favour in what has been done in these two years.

I do not understand what they write to me about a suit with the curate and chaplains—it must be of Santa Justa; I beg you to let me know what it is. I do not write to his honour, Señor Alonzo Ramirez, for I have no excuse for troubling him, as I am writing to yourself. As I cannot do what ought to be done as to my obligations to your honours, I entreat our Lord to repay it, and to keep you for many years, and make your little angels into saints, and especially my good patron, for we need much that he should so become. May our Lord also hold you always in His hand. Amen. To-day is the 29th of March.

Your honour's unworthy servant,

TERESA DE JESUS,

Carmelite.

The trouble about the Masses seems still to have continued, and Diego Ortiz must have sent a rather fierce letter to St. Teresa about it, by the hand of Father Mariano. Her answer is a perfect instance of her beautiful courtesy and prudence. We can only hope it did not fail of its purpose.

LETTER XXV.—*To Diego Ortiz at Toledo.*

Salamanca, May 27, 1571.

JESUS.

May the grace of the Holy Spirit be with your honour. Amen.

You do me so great a kindness by your letters, that even if the last had been much more severe than it was, I should have felt myself well treated, and obliged afresh to serve you all the more. You tell me that you wrote the letter which Father Mariano brought me, that I might

understand the good reasons you have for what you ask. I am convinced by the fact that you hold them so good, and by the fact that you know so well how to recommend what you want, that my own seem to have little force, and so I am minded not to defend myself with arguments, but, as people do who have a bad cause, to appeal to arbitration and put it into your own hands to decide, whether you are not more bound to show favour to your daughters the nuns, who are orphans and minors too, than to the chaplains,—since, after all, all belongs to you, and the convent itself and its inmates are more yours than those priests, who, as you say yourself, are some of them more anxious to get to the end of their work quickly than to do it with devotion.

You have done me a great kindness in agreeing to the arrangement about Vespers, which is a matter as to which I could not have given way. For the rest, I am now writing to the Mother Prioress to do as your honour ordains, and I send her your letter. I gladly think that we shall gain most by leaving everything in your hands and in those of Señor Alonzo Ramirez: settle it between you. I kiss his hands many times. I was very sorry to hear of the pain he suffers. Here we recommend him to our Lord, and we pray also for your honour and your wife and your little angels. May God make them His own and guard them.

One thing I think would be a serious burthen to the nuns. It would greatly inconvenience them if the Mass which any one might have celebrated for some festival were to be sung before the conventual Mass, especially if there were a sermon. I do not see how that could be arranged. It would matter little to you, if on such days the festival Mass was at the conventual Mass, and the chaplaincy Mass were said, without singing, a little before. There are not many such days. Do let your honour yield a little, contrary to what you desire, and do me this kindness, even if it be a feast-day, except those which you yourself cause

to be kept. Consider that this is as nothing, and it will be a great charity to the nuns, and a good work, and a great kindness to me.

Since the letter to our Father General has been sent, I have come to think that there was no reason for it. For anything the Father Visitor may do is much more sure ; it is as if the Pope himself did it, and no General nor General Chapter can undo it. He is very prudent and learned, and your honour will find much pleasure in conversing with him. And I believe that this spring he will, without fail, make his visitation, and he will be able to settle, without danger of alteration, all that your honour wishes, and I will beg it of him here. Whatever you think best and most secure, I will not depart from, and all that I can serve you in shall be done. I am sorry not to be with you to show my good-will in person. I commend myself much to the prayers of Señora Doña Francisca Ramirez. I have no fever now, glory be to God. You may write to me whatever you like, and as I know the good-will with which it is said, it will only give me pain if it gives you pain. I should certainly not like to do so, or that you should be pained by any one in that house. For the rest, nothing you say to me has done or can do me any hurt. May our Lord give you as much spiritual good as I ask His Majesty to give you, and may He hold your honour always by the hand. To-day is the Sunday after the Ascension.

The unworthy servant of your honour,

TERESA DE JESUS.

Another letter is to a lady of Segovia, who was about to enter the new convent. The date is disputed, but there are good reasons for following the arrangement which is preferred by Father Bouix as to this point. This Isabella Jimena entered the Convent of Salamanca, and it was while she was a

novice, at Easter, in 1571, that she sang, in the presence of St. Teresa, the verses beginning—

Vean te mis ojos  
Dulce Jesu bueno,

which caused the Saint to faint away out of excessive desire to die and see our Lord.

LETTER XXVI.—*To Doña Isabella de Jimena, at Segovia.*

JESUS.

May the Holy Spirit be always with your honour, and give you to understand how much you owe to our Lord, since, being in dangers so dangerous as are youth, fortune, and liberty, He has given you the light to desire to be delivered from them, and thus the things which frighten other souls, penance, and enclosure, and poverty, have been to your honour the occasion of understanding their true value, and the loss and illusion you might incur by following those other apparent goods. May our Lord be blessed and praised for all. This has been a sufficient reason for me to be easily persuaded by your honour that you are very virtuous, and fit to be a daughter of our Lady, entering this her sacred Order. May it please God that you may make such progress in your holy desires and works, that I may never have reason for anything but thankfulness to Father Juan de Leon, whose information so satisfies me that I ask no more. It gives me so much consolation to think that you are to be a great saint, that I shall be greatly contented to receive you with nothing but yourself.

May our Lord repay you the alms which you have determined to give to the house in which you enter, which is great, and your honour may be much consoled, because you do just what our Lord counsels, give yourself to Him, and what you have to the poor, for the love of Him. Considering what your honour has received of Him, I do



not think you can do less in return than what you are doing, and since you are doing all that you can, you do not do little, nor will you be repaid in small measure.

Since your honour has seen our Rules and Constitutions, I have no more to say, except that if you persevere in your determination, you may come to whichever of our houses you may choose, and in this I wish to please my good Father Juan de Leon, that you may make your own choice. It is true that I should like you to take the habit where I am myself, for certainly I desire to know your honour. May our Lord settle the whole as is most for His service, and as will be for His glory. Amen.

The unworthy servant of your honour,

TERESA DE JESUS,  
Carmelite.

The letters which have been just inserted speak of the two remaining foundations which belong to the period of St. Teresa's life which is comprised in the present volume. These two foundations were those of Salamanca and Alba de Tormes. The foundation of Salamanca was the first in point of time, but that of Alba de Tormes seems to have been projected some time before it was actually made. A famous Father of the Society of Jesus, Martin Gutierrez, was Rector of the College in Salamanca, and it was at his urgent instance that Teresa undertook the foundation there. She tells us that at first she did not like the proposal. The city of Salamanca was poor, and in such a place she could not have founded her convent, as she wished always to found her convents without endowment. However, as was usual with her, the thought of the glory of God overcame her prudential scruples.

She reflected that Avila was as poor a place as Salamanca, and that God had never let the Convent of St. Joseph want. In the course of the summer of 1570, Father Guttierrez renewed his application, and Teresa determined to resist no longer. She left Toledo, as we gather from one of the letters above, in the middle of August, and went to Avila. From Avila she wrote to ask the permission of the Bishop of Salamanca for the new convent. The Bishop was Don Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza, brother of the Duke de l'Infantado, a prelate conspicuous for piety, learning, and ability, who had distinguished himself at the Council of Trent. Father Guttierrez had already spoken to him about Teresa and her foundations, and he was so well disposed towards her that he gave her the required leave with a ready heart. The next step was to get a house. For this reason Teresa wrote to a lady at Salamanca, who hired a house for her, but it was at the time occupied by some students of the University, and they had to be persuaded to make way, before they were legally obliged to give up their apartments, for the new lessees. This was managed with some difficulty, and Teresa insisted here, as elsewhere, on the observance of the most perfect secrecy as to who she was and what were her intentions. This foundation of Salamanca was not exposed to any visible danger of opposition, such as had met her elsewhere, but she had learnt by experience the absolute necessity of silence as to any good work of the kind on which she was occupied. The difficulties of the convent came after it was founded.

When all was arranged, as far as was possible, and without knowing any one at Salamanca who was likely to assist her with money, Teresa left Avila with a single nun for her companion, Mary of the Holy Sacrament. They arrived at Salamanca on the eve of All Saints, about the middle of the day. They had suffered much on the journey, on account of the bad lodging in which they had passed the night. There was a gentleman of Salamanca, Nicolas Guttierrez, who had two daughters in the Convent of the Incarnation at Avila, and who was thus known to Teresa. It is not said whether he was a relative of Father Guttierrez. He had once been very rich, and had been reduced to poverty, and St. Teresa praises him much for the virtues he had displayed under his change of fortune. He had taken a great interest in the foundation which was now to be made, and Teresa sought him out at once on her arrival. He told her that it would be difficult to get the students out of the house immediately, but she insisted so urgently on entering at once, before her arrival got noised about, that he exerted himself so well that the house was empty that same evening. It was very dirty, she tells us, the students not being particular on that point, and they had hard work to get it into a fit state for the celebration of Mass the next morning. Father Guttierrez lent them the chalice and other necessities for the Divine Sacrifice, and the Mass was said, which was sufficient for the foundation. They had not the Blessed Sacrament for a long time. The convent

was dedicated to St. Joseph, and its foundation dates from this day, the feast of All Saints, 1570.

Teresa tells us in her pleasant way the fright in which she and her companion spent the first night after the foundation.

I have to tell you one thing, my Sisters, at which I am ready to laugh when I remember it—the fears of my companion, Mary of the Blessed Sacrament, a nun older than myself, and a great servant of God. The house was very large and rambling, with many garrets, and my companion could not get the students out of her thoughts, thinking that, as they were so annoyed at having to quit the house, some of them might still be hiding in it. They could very easily do so, for there was room enough. We shut ourselves up in a room wherein the straw was placed, that being the first thing provided for the founding of the house, for with the straw we could not fail to have a bed. That night we slept on it, covered by two blankets that had been lent us. The next day the nuns who lived close by, and who, we thought, were not at all pleased with us, lent us blankets for our Sisters who were to come, and sent us alms. It was the Convent of St. Elizabeth, and all the time we remained in that house they rendered us many services and gave us alms.

When my companion saw herself shut up in the room, she seemed somewhat at ease about the students, though she did nothing but look about her first on this side and then on the other; still she was afraid, and Satan must have helped her to imagine dangers, for the purpose of troubling me, for, owing to the weakness of the heart from which I suffer, very little is enough to do it. I asked her why she was looking about, seeing that nobody could possibly come in. She replied, "Mother, I was thinking if I were to die now, what would you do alone." I thought

it would be a disagreeable thing, if it happened. It made me dwell on it for a moment, and even to be afraid, for though I am not afraid of dead bodies, they always cause a certain faintness of heart even when I am not alone. And as the bells were tolling—it was, as I said, the eve of All Souls—the devil took advantage of that to make us waste our thoughts upon trifles. When he sees we are not afraid of him, he searches for other means. I answered her, “Sister, when that shall happen, I will consider what I shall do; now let me go to sleep.” As we had spent two nights without rest, sleep soon put an end to our fears. More nuns came on the following day, and then all our terrors were over.<sup>2</sup>

The religious who came the next day were Anne of the Incarnation, from Medina del Campo, who was made Prioress of the new house, Mary of Christ and Geronima of Jesus, from the same convent. Two came from Avila, Anne of Jesus, of whom we shall presently speak, and Geronima of Jesus; and from Toledo, Mary of St. Francis. The troubles of the Convent of Salamanca and St. Teresa’s share in remedying them will have to be related hereafter.

The foundation of the convent at Alba de Tormes took place as follows. There were living in that town a worthy couple, Francisco Velasquez, the intendant or steward for the Duke of Alva, and Teresa de Laiz. St. Teresa tells the story of this good pair in her account of the foundation, and her narrative adds another picture to the many which we have already incidentally collected, of the Spanish

<sup>2</sup> *Foundations*, c. xx.

domestic life in the days of which we are writing. Teresa de Laiz was the fifth daughter of her parents, who were much disappointed that she was not a boy. They were people of noble birth, but being poor they had settled in a small village, called Tordillos, a few miles from Alba. Somehow they were so disappointed at this fifth girl, that she was almost left to die unattended on the third day after she was born. She was left alone the whole day. A servant ran to see how she was, and taking her in her arms, said: "How, my child, are you not a Christian?" The child raised its head and said: "Yes, I am." Her mother then began to cherish and take care of her, and she brought her up in the practice of all Christian virtues. The girl had an aversion to marriage, but as soon as she heard that Francisco Velasquez was the candidate for her hand, she changed her mind and determined to marry him at once if she could. He was a rich and very good man.

She [says St. Teresa] is also exceedingly good, for when her husband took her to Alba, his native place, and the quartermaster of the Duke assigned a lodging in her house to a young cavalier, she felt it so much that she hated the place, for being young and very beautiful, evil might have happened if she had not been so good, seeing that Satan began to suggest evil thoughts to the cavalier. She perceiving this, but without saying anything about it to her husband, asked him to take her elsewhere. He did so and brought her to Salamanca, where they lived in great happiness and worldly prosperity, for he had an office on account of which everybody wished much to satisfy him and please him. One trouble only they had—our Lord left them childless. She used to

practise many devotions and make many prayers to obtain children from our Lord, and never begged anything else of Him but children who, when she was dead, might praise His Majesty; for she thought it hard that all should end with her, and that, when her time was come, she should leave none behind to praise God. She told me herself that she had no other reason for desiring children, and she is a woman of great truthfulness. She passed many years having this desire, praying also to St. Andrew, who she was told would intercede for her in her trouble. One night, after her many devotions were over which she used habitually to make, she heard a voice when she laid down to sleep saying, "Do not wish for children; why damn thyself?" She was very much astonished and alarmed, but for all this the wish to have children never left her; for, as the end she had in view was good, she could not see why she should be damned for it, and so she went on praying to our Lord for children, and making special prayers to St. Andrew in particular. On one occasion, entertaining this desire, she does not know whether she was awake or asleep—be that as it may, she knows by the results that it was a good vision—she seemed to be in a certain house, in the court of which, beneath the gallery, was a well, and there she saw a meadow fresh and green, covered with white flowers, in such great beauty that she cannot describe what she saw. Close to the well she beheld St. Andrew in a most venerable and beautiful form, so that it was a great joy to look on him. He said to her, "These children are different from those whom thou desirest." She wished the great joy she had in that place might not come to an end, but it did not last. She saw distinctly it was St. Andrew, without being told so by anybody, and also that it was our Lord's will she should found a monastery, whereby we may see that the vision was as much intellectual as imaginary—that it could not be fancy, or an illusion of Satan.

It is interesting to remark the reasons which St. Teresa here gives for her statement that this vision could not come from Satan. They reveal her own consummate experience in such matters.

In the first place it was no fancy, because of the great results which flowed from it, for from that moment she never again asked for children; she was so persuaded in her heart that it was the will of God, that she neither asked nor even desired to have children any more. Next, it is clear that voice came not from Satan, because of the effects of it; for nothing that comes from him can do any good, as the founding of a monastery is, wherein our Lord is greatly served. And again, it could not be from Satan, because it took place more than six years before the monastery was founded, and Satan cannot know what is coming. Being much amazed at the vision, she said to her husband that they might as well found a monastery, seeing it was not the will of God that they should have children. As he was so good and loved her so much, her husband was delighted at it, and they began to consider where they should make a foundation. She was for the place where she was born. He suggested to her many good reasons against it, in order that she might see it would not do to build there.<sup>3</sup>

After a time the Duke required Velasquez to live at Alba, and he accordingly left Salamanca, much to his wife's grief. She was told that no lodgers would be admitted, and this to some extent pacified her, but she liked Salamanca better. He bought a fine house and she came to join him, still unconsoled for the change of abode. But the first morning after her arrival she went into the court of the new house, and there recognized the well exactly in the spot close to

<sup>3</sup> *Foundations*, c. xx. 5—8.



which she had seen St. Andrew in her vision. Everything was exactly like what had been shown her. She saw clearly then that this was the place for her foundation. But there were to be many hindrances. The advisers they consulted could not agree as to the Order to which the convent should be offered, and other objections were made. At last the husband and wife gave up the plan, and it was settled that the nephew of the one should be married to the niece of the other, and take the place of the children they had so long desired in vain. But a few days after this had been agreed upon the nephew of Teresa Laiz died suddenly. This great blow brought back all the thoughts which had been set aside of the foundation of a convent.

God put into her heart [says St. Teresa], so it seems, that which is now done ; and those to whom she spoke and described the kind of monastery she wished to have—in particular her confessor, a Franciscan friar, a learned and distinguished man—ridiculed it, for they thought she would never find what she was seeking. She was in very great trouble. This friar happened to go, about this time, to a certain place where he was told of these monasteries of Our Lady of Carmel which were being established. Having obtained much information about them, he returned and told her that he had now learnt that she could found her monastery, and in the way she wished. He told her what had happened, and recommended her to find means of speaking to me. She did so. We had a great deal of trouble in making the arrangement, for I have always laboured to have the monasteries which are endowed sufficiently furnished, so that there shall be no need for the nuns to apply to their kindred or any one else ; that

they shall have in the house whatever is necessary for food and raiment, and that the sick shall be well cared for, because many inconveniences result from the want of what is necessary. I have never been without the courage and the confidence necessary for founding monasteries without revenues, for I was certain that God would never fail them ; but I have no heart for founding monasteries, and that scantily—I think it better not to found them at all. At last they became reasonable, and assigned a sufficient endowment for the number of nuns. They also did that which I thought much of—they left their own house and gave it to us, going themselves to live in one that was in a wretched state. The Most Holy Sacrament was reserved and the foundation made on the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, in the year 1571, to the honour and glory of God. And in that house I believe His Majesty is well served—may it please Him ever to prosper it.<sup>4</sup>

The succinct account here given by St. Teresa requires one or two supplemental statements. It seems that St. Teresa visited Alba de Tormes as early as the January of the year 1570, and it was for the purpose of conferring with Teresa de Laiz and her husband that this journey was made. Her own sister, Juana de Ahumada, was settled there, and it must have been through her that she made the acquaintance of the intended foundress of the convent. On that occasion, then, it would appear that the two parties could not come to an agreement, on account of the reasons given by St. Teresa in the passage just now quoted. Velasquez and his good wife may not have been able all at once to find the funds necessary for the endowment of the whole

<sup>4</sup> *Foundations*, c. xx.

convent. It was not till after the foundation of Salamanca, in the November of the same year, that the negotiations were recommenced, and then it was that the final arrangement was made. We have already mentioned the date of the foundation. The convent was dedicated under the title of the Incarnation, or of Our Lady of the Annunciation. The Prioress was Juana of the Holy Ghost, who came from Toledo with two others, Giuomar of Jesus and Mary of the Most Holy Sacrament. Three others were afterwards added, Thomasina Baptist, Agnes of Jesus, and Mary of St. Francis. Mary of the Most Holy Sacrament was placed in the office of Subprioress.

## CHAPTER XV.

### *Teresa as Prioress at the Convent of the Incarnation.*

A FEW months remain of the period of St. Teresa's life on which we are now occupied. Teresa does not appear to have stayed long at Alba after the foundation of the convent was accomplished. She was much more needed at Salamanca. Her nuns there had only hired a house to live in, and they were, as has been said, deprived of the one great consolation which makes all the hardships of the religious life seem as nothing, the presence of the Blessed Sacrament on their altar. We begin to find now that Teresa was not always left by her Superiors to make her own arrangements. A great nobleman of the city, the Conde de Monterey, had asked the Provincial of the Carmelites that he might have her in his house for a short time at this visit to Salamanca. Teresa obeyed, and her stay with the Conde was marked by two singular miracles wrought by her means. There was a servant in the house in a dangerous fever, and given over by the physicians. Teresa was asked to visit her, and she laid her hands on the head of the sick person, who immediately woke, sat up in her bed, and asked who had touched her, declaring that she was cured. Teresa tried to

make the bystanders believe that the woman was raving, but she soon convinced them that she was in her senses and perfectly cured. The other case was a child of the Conde and his wife, who was almost dying when they implored St. Teresa to pray for her. She obeyed, and in her prayer she had a vision in which St. Dominic and St. Catharine of Siena appeared to her, saying that the child was to be cured and to wear the habit of St. Dominic for a year. Teresa could not tell this to the parents without revealing that she had had a vision, so she told the whole to Father Banez, who was then at Salamanca, and he induced the Conde and his wife to carry out the condition. The child, when she grew up, became the wife of the Conde D'Olivarez, and was the mother of the famous Minister, the Duke of the same name.

Teresa stayed not more than a few days with the Conde, and then passed to her new convent. She was not, however, to rest long among her spiritual children; business of importance called her to Medina del Campo. We have already heard of the rich novice, Isabella of the Angels, and the time of her profession was now come. Isabella wished to give a part of her fortune to the convent, but she was opposed by her relations, and these had managed to get on their side Father Angelo de Salazar, the Provincial of the Carmelites. Father Angelo was already out of humour with St. Teresa, on account of a selection which she had made for the Convent of Alba. Teresa was inclined to side with the nuns and the novice herself in the matter of the fortune,

and she went to Medina for the purpose of using her influence in the business. It appears to have been settled as she thought right, notwithstanding the opposition of the Provincial. But he was soon able to show his authority in another way. The time had come for the election of a Prioress of Medina del Campo, and the desire of the community, as well as of St. Teresa herself, was that Agnes of Jesus should be elected to the vacant office. Agnes was elected, but the Provincial quashed the election, and forced the nuns to accept a religious lately come from the Convent of the Incarnation, Teresa de Quesada. He also ordered St. Teresa and Agnes of Jesus to quit the convent immediately, on pain of excommunication. He then placed Teresa de Quesada at the head of the convent. Teresa obeyed the injunction to leave Medina del Campo on the spot, although she had to leave at night and ride twenty leagues on a mule, to reach Avila, whither the Provincial bade her go.

It was during her stay at her Convent of Avila on this occasion that St. Teresa met for the first time a person who was to have a great influence both on her immediate future, and on the future of the Reform which she had begun. This was the famous Father Pedro Hernandez, of the Order of St. Dominic. He was at that time Apostolic Visitor of the Order of Mount Carmel in Spain, a man of great learning, piety, and prudence. He had heard of Teresa from several of the members of his own Order who were acquainted with her, especially Father Bañez. Thus when Pope Paul V., at the

request of Philip II., appointed him one of the visitors of Carmel in Spain, Father Hernandez visited the convents and monasteries of the Reform before those of the Mitigation, and he had been so pleased and struck with the regular observance of the friars at Pastrana, that he had given leave for the foundation of a third monastery of the Reform at Alcala de Henares. He was at Avila when St. Teresa arrived there, having been expelled from the Convent at Medina by Father Angelo de Salazar, who thus contributed not a little to the advance of the Reform by giving Father Hernandez the opportunity of knowing its foundress. Teresa had but one way with any one who came to her with the marks of authority about him. She opened herself entirely to Father Hernandez, giving him a full account of her life, her manner of prayer, her gifts, her vocation to the Reform of Mount Carmel, and the various houses which she had founded. He was delighted and full of admiration. She was a man, he said to Father Bañez, not a woman. He would not suffer a word against her in his presence. But he conceived a design concerning her, which certainly was not in accordance either with her expectations or her desires. This design we shall presently see accomplished.

The Convent of the Incarnation was in a deplorable state. The number of its inmates had fallen considerably, but this was rather a gain than a loss. There were still eighty nuns belonging to the community, but they were continually asking for permission to reside with their families, on account of

the extreme poverty of the convent, which made it difficult for the Superiors to provide them with the necessaries of life. Many of the best subjects had left for the foundations made by St. Teresa, but we have seen that they did not always persevere in their new vocation. In such a state of things temporal, it was not likely that the spiritual condition of the convent could be flourishing. Discipline could not be kept up; it is even said that the regular exercises of the religious observance, to which the Sisters were bound, had ceased. This was the state of things which met the eye of the Apostolic Visitor on the one hand. On the other hand, there was the little Convent of St. Joseph's, with its small number of nuns, its strict observance of the primitive rule, and the happiness and perfection which could not fail to reveal themselves to a religious of so much experience. This had been the work of one who had belonged to the Convent of the Incarnation, and who was at his disposal as Visitor. She was still remembered and beloved within the walls of her first convent, and her reputation outside the enclosure was such as to make it highly probable that her influence might aid the community in temporal matters, as much as her example might help in the remedying of the religious defects which had crept in, and her powers of government and other great qualities might do the rest. We cannot be surprised if Father Pedro conceived the somewhat bold plan of making Teresa the Prioress of the Convent of the Incarnation.

Nor, on the other hand, can we wonder if she herself was strongly averse to the wishes of the



Visitor. She knew that if she had still many friends among the nuns of her former convent, it could hardly be but that the feelings of bitterness and anger, which her migration to St. Joseph's had occasioned, must survive in many hearts, all the more because she had now some of the prestige of success, while the Convent of the Incarnation was in affliction and discredit. It was inevitable that it should be thought by some that she would use her power to introduce the Reform itself into the older convent. The fears and apprehensions of religious souls, as to any possible infringement on their narrow liberties, are often very exaggerated and even ludicrous, but they exist nevertheless, and their influence is very great. Moreover, Teresa knew the great difficulties of undertaking anything like a restoration of observance where it had been lost, and the care of the temporalities of a convent in such a state as that of the Incarnation was of itself enough to appal her. Even if she succeeded, her charge there would occupy her whole time, and so would take her away from the care of the convents of the Reform already founded, as well as hinder her from continuing her foundations. All this must have made the heart of St. Teresa very sore. For herself, she loved nothing so much as to be allowed to lead a quiet life of observance of the primitive rule in one of her convents, and the journeys and business transactions, the dealing with men of all sorts and character, the constant opposition and jealousy with which she was met, in the course of her foundations, and the difficulties which were raised by the wishes or vagaries of the founders, were a heavy

cross to her, which she bore cheerfully indeed, but still suffering under it. It needed a special indication of the will of God to make her look with equanimity on the prospect now before her.

St. Teresa herself gives us the account of the manner in which she was brought round to consent to the proposal of the Visitor. "One day after the octave of the Visitation, in one of the hermitages of Mount Carmel, praying to God for one of my brothers, I said to our Lord—I do not know whether it was only in thought or not, for my brother was in a place where his salvation was in peril—'If I saw one of Thy brethren, O Lord, in this danger, what would I not do to help him!' It seemed to me that there was nothing which I would not have done. Our Lord said to me, 'Daughter! daughter! the nuns of the Incarnation are thy sisters, and thou holdest back! Take courage, then; behold this is what I would have thee do. It is not so difficult as it seems, and though it seems to thee that by going thither thy foundations will be ruined, yet it is by thy going that both these and the monasteries of the Incarnation will gain; resist not, for My power is great.'"<sup>1</sup>

Father Hernandez did not immediately place St. Teresa at the head of the Convent of the Incarnation. He had heard of the disturbance occasioned at Medina del Campo by the arbitrary act of the Provincial in appointing Teresa de Quesada to the post of Prioress. This religious, fresh from the Convent of the Incarnation, and perhaps not very capable in

<sup>1</sup> *Relation*, iii. 11.

any case of ruling a community which was not well disposed towards her, on account of the manner in which their own choice had been set aside, soon tired of her position, and retired to her former convent. Father Hernandez went himself to Medina del Campo, and ordered an election of a new Prioress to be made. It was made under his own direction, and in order not to seem to reverse too formally the decision of the Provincial, he directed the election of St. Teresa herself instead of that of Agnes of Jesus, who had been set aside by Father Angelo de Salazar. Agnes was at Avila with St. Teresa. Before leaving Avila, Teresa, as well as Agnes herself, made a solemn renunciation of the mitigated rule which was still observed in the Convent of the Incarnation, to which both had once belonged. This had been ordered by the Visitor, in the case of all the religious of the Mitigation who should at any time pass to the convents or monasteries of the Reform. The renunciations are given by the historian Yepes, and are dated July 13th, 1571, the witnesses being Master Gaspard Daza, Julian of Avila, Father Mariano, Fra Juan de la Miseria, and Francisco de Salcedo. Teresa says, in her renunciation, that she has always observed the primitive rule since the foundation of the Convent of St. Joseph, and that the Father General had given her leave to observe it, even in the Convent of the Incarnation, if she should ever be obliged to return thither.

In the month of October following the date of these renunciations, Father Hernandez formally accepted them as Visitor at Medina, and he trans-

ferred to the Convent of Salamanca the right of conventuality which Teresa and her cousin held in the Convent of the Incarnation. It was in July, then, of this year that St. Teresa set out for her short period of government at Medina del Campo. A story is told of this journey, that when the party came to the bank of a river which had to be crossed, and the guides did not know where to find the ford, Teresa rode on in front by herself, saying it would not do to pass the night where they were; they were to recommend themselves to God, and pass on without fear. The rest of the party are said to have seen a light around her which showed the path in safety.

But, as has been said, her stay at Medina was not of long duration. Father Hernandez finished his visitation of the convents in that city, in which there was also a Convent of the Mitigation, and then he assembled a Chapter of the Carmelite Friars of the Mitigation and took the votes of the Definitors of the Order. After this was done, he, with the consent of all, nominated St. Teresa Prioress of the Incarnation. He then went to Avila himself, and she followed him, going however to the Convent of St. Joseph, both to console her own children and to await the turn of events, before making her appearance at the Convent of the Incarnation. The state of feeling there may easily be imagined. All the objections that Teresa had foreseen were at once made, and the nuns were aggrieved at finding that the Visitor was about to deny them the right of electing their own Superior. It was natural for them to impute to him motives of hostility to the peace of the community, and, no

doubt, observations were made on the inconvenience of having in such a position a man who knew nothing of the Order of Mount Carmel. Among the various laxities which called loudly for reform, not the least was the habit of receiving almost indiscriminate visits in the parlour from gentlemen of the town. It was felt that this was one of the customs which would not be likely to survive long the appointment of the foundress of the Reform to the supreme power in the convent. The gentlemen were no doubt as much aggrieved as the nuns themselves, and by their aid a kind of opposition was organized outside the walls as well as within. But Teresa did not appear until she had made an experiment as to the extent to which her authority was already recognized. The convent contained within its walls a certain number of young ladies who were being brought up as Teresa had herself been brought up within the walls of the Augustinian Convent. Their presence was, no doubt, a distraction at the best of times, but in those days, before the great development of teaching Orders for women in the Church, the custom could not, as a general rule, be objected to, though a Carmelite convent was more likely to suffer from it than some others. But, as stormy scenes were probably at hand, Teresa felt that the presence of these boarders might be a cause of trouble to the nuns, or even of scandal to the girls themselves. So she sent an order from the Convent of St. Joseph to that of the Incarnation, requiring the immediate dismissal of these young ladies. The order was obeyed. In the case of one poor orphan child, she was so considerate as to allow

her to remain in the quality of a servant. The girl afterwards became a good religious.

The state of things in the convent made Father Hernandez think it prudent to reserve his own presence as a means of influence in the last resource, and he committed the task of installing Teresa to the Provincial, Father Angelo de Salazar, who was to be accompanied by another Father to assist him in case of need. Then, on the appointed day, Father Angelo went with his companion and St. Teresa to the convent. The religious were assembled in a lower choir, in which Chapters were held, and the act of the Visitor Apostolic, appointing Teresa Prioress, was read to them. Then the tumult began. A large number of the nuns rose up in protest, and abused Teresa and her companions in violent language. They declared that their rights were being violated. There was another party among the community, naturally less vociferous and demonstrative than the other. One of these, a nun of the name of Catharine de Castro, raised her voice so as to be heard over the storm, and declared that they wished for Mother Teresa for their Prioress, and they loved her. She then intoned the *Te Deum Laudamus*. Others seized the cross, which was the symbol of authority, and walked in procession before St. Teresa into the upper choir. The other party tried to oppose them, but here the Provincial and his companion prevented them, and the scene now shifted to the upper choir, in which the whole community was assembled. The *Te Deum* continued. Teresa was prostrate before the Blessed Sacrament in a corner, praying for peace.

The disturbance, however, continued, even in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. The Provincial became angry, and threatened the refractory nuns with severe punishment. Then Teresa rose, and tried to make peace. She excused the nuns to the Provincial on the ground of her own great unworthiness, while at the same time she pacified the nuns by addressing tender and affectionate words to one after another, lovingly taking them by the hand. Some of them had fainted in the excitement of the conflict, and she is said to have brought them to by her simple touch. She attributed this effect to a large relic of the true Cross which she carried with her. Gradually the disturbance ceased. X The new Prioress was installed, and the opposition had nothing to do but to submit.

The true victory of St. Teresa, however, came a little later. The trial of the new reign would take place on the first chapter-day. Then it was to be expected that the nuns who had opposed her so violently would be called to give an account of themselves, and to do penance and ask pardon. Nothing of the kind occurred. When the community entered the lower choir, where the Chapters were held, they found the stall usually occupied by the Prioress tenanted by a statue of the Blessed Virgin. Teresa herself was seated on a low seat at the feet of our Blessed Lady, and when all were assembled, she arose, and addressed them. Her words have been preserved :

Ladies, my Mothers and my Sisters,  
Our Lord, by means of the orders of my Superiors,

has sent me to this house to fill the place of Prioress. I was quite as far from thinking of such an office, as I am from deserving it. More than this, it has given me great pain to have to fill it, because I am unable to do so worthily; because, by my nomination, you have been deprived of the power of electing a Prioress to your own liking; and because I am much more fit to imitate the least one among you, than to be placed at your head. I come here only for one purpose, and that one, I trust, our Lord will give me the grace to fulfil. It is to serve you and to comfort you, to the utmost of my power. As for anything else, no one among you but is capable of giving me lessons in virtue, and of correcting me of my faults. Tell me then, what I can do for the good of each one among you. Were it needful to give my blood and my life for this, I would do so with all my heart.

I am a daughter of this house, and I am your sister. I know the character and the needs of all, or at least of the greater part of you. ✕ There is, therefore, no reason why you should regard as a stranger one who is yours by so many titles. ✕

Do not take umbrage at my authority. It is true that I have lived for some years past among the Carmelites of the Reform, and that I have governed them. But, by God's grace, I know how to deal with those who are not reformed. My only desire is, that we should all serve our Lord with sweetness, and perform, for the love of His Majesty, and out of gratitude for the great benefits with which He has loaded us, that little which is required of us by our Rule and by our Constitutions. I know our weakness—it is great; but if we do not in our needs come up to all that our Lord asks of us, we will try to do so in our desires. He is merciful; He will certainly give us His grace, so that by degrees our actions may come in answer to our goodwill.



All hearts were gained by this gentle and humble speech. Teresa said nothing about the scene which had taken place on her entrance, nor did she hear more, from the nuns at least, of their opposition to her rule. Her reform of the abuses of the convent was very gradual—at least, if it succeeded within a far shorter time than might have been expected, it succeeded by the conquest of the wills of the nuns themselves, rather than by any acts of authority on her own part. First of all, the temporal matters were put in a better way. Alms began to flow in for the relief of the needs of the convent, and Teresa was able to provide especially for those whom she always considered as the treasures of a religious community—the sick and infirm. She said nothing about the parlours, until the nuns themselves brought her the keys, and begged her to set that matter in order as she thought best. Then she placed the keys in the hands of a prudent religious, in whom she could confide, and thus the great wound to religious discipline and recollection was healed. The proof that it was healed was furnished by the anger of the late visitors, one of whom sent for Teresa to the parlour, and abused her roundly. Her installation took place in October, 1571, as has been said. By the Lent of the next year, the observance in the Convent of the Incarnation was brought up, without any violence, to a point little, if at all, behind that of the houses of her own Reform. She obtained about the same time the services of two Fathers of the Reform as the confessors of the convent, one of whom was St. John of the Cross himself.

The first volume of the present Life of St. Teresa can hardly close at a fitter point in her career than this, of her assumption of government in the convent in which she had first vowed herself to the service of God, and in which she had received so many singular favours from Him. The time which was now beginning was a time of rest, even though it was not spent in the community which she had herself gathered together, and where her heart constantly lived. Some of the prominent incidents of this period of comparative repose will be more naturally related in the succeeding volume, but it will be well to avail ourselves of this break in the direct narrative to add some details which may serve to illustrate and make more familiar to us the daily surroundings of the Saint, and especially some of the companions who had been sent to join her in her great work. Many incidents already mentioned have served to show how everywhere in the Spain of that time there was to be found that Christian family life, which is always the stronghold of religion and piety in a country. Where this life exists, there are sure to be found the souls whom God is able, so to speak, to choose as His great instruments in the reformation and restoration of His Church and in the infusing of fresh vigour into her spiritual work.

The history of the sixteenth century, which witnessed the defection from the Church of so large a portion of what once was Catholic Christendom, cannot be duly understood unless the work for God of the Spanish Saints is taken into account. Some of these, like St. Teresa herself, St. Ignatius,

St. Francis Xavier, St. Francis Borja, St. Peter of Alcantara, St. John of God, and many others, have been placed by the Church on her altars, while almost countless others have aided, in a degree scarcely inferior, in the defence and advancement of the Church, and, though they have left fewer traces in human history, their labours and services have not been without their reward before God. But a generation of saints like that which produced the great names which have been mentioned, is ordinarily impossible in a country in which piety and faith are not deeply rooted in the hearts and lives of the population generally. It is the goodness of the soil which makes the plentiful harvest possible, and for this reason, when we are endeavouring to give an account of the glorious labours of Teresa de Ahumada, it is essential to note how, wherever she went, in her foundations, she met with or heard of souls on all sides, ready to join her in the life of continual sacrifice and penance to which her Rule invited them. Her Reform, like all other such movements, was an appeal to generous souls, and generous souls were not wanting to answer that appeal. It is in this that the real strength of the Catholic Church very mainly consists, and it is by this strong and teeming vitality that she is enabled to override so many storms which seem to threaten her destruction. She suffers, indeed, very greatly from external assaults and afflictions, the evils which come from persecuting Governments, the plundering by covetous princes of the resources on which her missions depend, the scattering of her Religious Orders, the usurpation of

her territories by anti-Christian invaders, or the bad faith of rulers who are the tools or the puppets of the Revolution. But as long as the Christian populations are sound, her life is safe, and the recovery even of her external powers follows with wonderful rapidity, on the first occasion on which Providence opens the door. Happily, it requires more than one generation to destroy the faith and piety of a people. The modern enemies of religion have discovered this, and they consequently direct their attacks mainly to the corruption of Christian marriage and Christian education.

A little has already been said about the first companions of St. Teresa and about some few of those who joined her when she began the work of her foundations. In all cases we have found reason to admire the deeply Christian character of the home life in Spain. It will be well to mention a few more of these devoted souls. We shall thus see that, as she had, by the time of which we are speaking, gained the assistance of the great Saint whose name will be for ever associated with her own, as the first friar of the Reform of Mount Carmel, St. John of the Cross, so also she had gained recruits, among the candidates for her convents, who were to become very celebrated indeed in the annals of the new Order of our Lady. At the time of which we are speaking, two, who were to become very famous Carmelite nuns, had quite lately taken the habit of the Reform. The first of these of whom we shall speak was the holy religious known as the Venerable Anne of St. Bartholomew. She was, it appears, the

first to be admitted to the Reform in the quality of lay-sister. St. Teresa had begun her Convent of St. Joseph with the intention of having no difference between nuns of one sort and of another. She probably thought that poverty and simplicity would be better secured by having the meanest offices of household life discharged by the nuns of the choir themselves, and she herself set the example of devotion to these humble duties. But she found, as time went on, that they were too laborious for the choir nuns indiscriminately, and that they distracted them from that intense attention to prayer which was the life of the new community. Still, Teresa did not at once make the change which was suggested by experience in this respect. She seems to have resolved to wait till she could find some very specially gifted soul to be the first lay-sister. Thus it was not till the time of the foundation of Salamanca, of which an account has been given in the last chapter, that the beginning of a long line of holy lives in the humble habit of lay-sisters was made by the admission of Anne of St. Bartholomew to the Convent of St. Joseph at Avila.

This celebrated religious has left behind her an account of her own early years, which is full of interest on account of its simplicity, and of the marvellous dealings of God with her soul which it relates. Anne was of humble birth, though not of the very lowest class. Her parents were not rich. They were apparently small proprietors, living on their own farm or estate, well known for their charity and piety, and for the care which they took for the

good education of their children, as far as that lay within their reach. The household was said to be as regular as a convent or monastery. The girls, of whom there were four, never went out except to Mass, and a virtuous priest lived with the family to guide and instruct them. Anne was born in 1549, in a hamlet of Old Castile, called Almandral, near Ubaldo. God imparted great favours to her soul from her earliest years. At the age of seven she fell into a great alarm, lest she should offend Him by sin, and offered up special devotions to our Blessed Lady, St. Joseph, St. John Baptist, and the Holy Angels, for protection against this danger. She began to practise prayer, after a simple fashion, when she was quite young, and used to ask our Lord to give her leave to go and play, promising to come back again to prayer. At ten years old she was left an orphan by the death of both her parents, and then her brothers, who were the eldest of the family, became her guardians. She was now sent to the fields to look after the sheep, and she found means to make this employment a great help to prayer and recollection. She learnt easily to raise her heart to Heaven from the sight of flowers, trees, and other simple natural objects, and she delighted in the solitude which enabled her to converse so constantly with her God. Soon she began to feel a constant desire to retire into some desert, to do rigorous penance and spend her whole time in prayer.

She had a near relation, of the same age and sex as herself, with whom she had been brought up; and with this girl she conceived a plan, very

much like that of Teresa herself when a child, of going off into a desert to live for God alone. But, though they settled on the night on which to start, and prepared themselves for the journey, they found themselves hindered by some unseen power. Anne could not get up a tree from which she was to find her way into the road, and her cousin could not open the door through which she had to pass, though she had the key with her. They met at Mass in the morning, and each explained to the other the cause of her own failure. They came to the conclusion that their enterprise could not be agreeable to God. After this they took to severe penances, with works of charity and mortification. Anne was moved to tears whenever she saw a crucifix. She used to go with her feet bare, and give her little dinner, which she carefully saved for the purpose, to the poor. Once she was asked why she did not eat, and she equivocated in order to escape remark. But she was immediately conscience-stricken, and ran to her confessor to accuse herself.

These two young girls seemed to have but one heart and one soul. As each had the same employment of feeding the sheep, they used to sit together under the same tree, and spend their time in contemplation. When they could get away unobserved, they went to the hospital, to take to the poor what they had saved of their food, and what clothes they could spare by depriving themselves of what were given them. Thus the years of their childhood passed by. As soon as Anne was of marriageable age—and in Spain girls were married young—her brothers

began to think of finding her a husband. As she was very much afraid of them, she only put them off by saying she had other designs. They did not understand that her desire was to consecrate her virginity to God. She suffered much in this way, as their importunities continued. At last she went to the altar of the Blessed Virgin and wept bitterly in her despair. Our Lady appeared to her, with her Divine Child in her arms, and promised her that she should be a religious of her own Order.

But Anne was so hardly pressed as to be on the point of yielding. Then our Lord Himself spoke to her heart, saying He was the object of her love and she was to belong to Him. One day one of her sisters sent for her, having arranged for her a meeting, without her knowledge, with a young man who desired to marry her. Anne somehow found out the plan, and went to the house of her sister covered with all the old rags she could find at home. Another time she was induced to join a party of young people at the Carnival, but when the dancing was to begin, she firmly excused herself and withdrew. At last she had a dream, in which she saw a small poor convent, in which there were few religious, spending their time like angels on earth. Soon after, her confessor, the curate of the village, to whom she trusted herself entirely for guidance, became acquainted with the convent at Avila, of which Mary of St. Jerome was then Prioress, in the absence of St. Teresa, who was occupied in her foundations. He spoke about his penitent to Mary of St. Jerome, and the result of his recommendations



was an invitation to Anne to come and see the convent.

This was of course the cause of intense delight to Anne, but her brothers were as opposed as ever to her vocation. However, they were too good Christians to resist to the utmost, and so they accompanied their sister in her journey to Avila. As soon as she came within sight of the outside of the convent, she recognized it as the place which had been shown her in her dream. She knew even the faces of the nuns. In her dream she had felt thirsty, and one of the religious had given her something to drink. She saw in the convent the very vessel out of which she had drunk. All were delighted with her, she was proposed in Chapter and received, but as no preparations had been made for her clothing, which, according to the custom of that time, was to take place immediately on her entrance into the convent, it was necessary that she should return with her brothers and wait at home till the preparations were completed.

This was the occasion of fresh sufferings to the good servant of God. Her brothers had not been at all pleased with what they had seen of the externals of St. Joseph's. It was poor, small, close, altogether uninviting. So they set themselves once again to turn her away from her design. They began by laying on her an amount of physical labour which was altogether beyond her natural strength. She was set to work in the fields during the hot summer days, to carry heavy burthens, to drive a pair of vicious oxen, and the like. All this she

accomplished with a marvellous ease. One day her oxen had strayed, and she had with great trouble managed to catch one. In her search for the other she was attacked by a furious dog, which tore her clothes to rags, and was about to tear her also, when it was forced to leave her by being itself attacked by the ox that she was in search of. At the same time she was tormented by apparitions of the devil. Under all these trials her strength gave way, and she was reduced to a miserable state of weakness. All hope of her being a religious seemed now out of the question, but they took her on a pilgrimage to a hermitage dedicated to St. Bartholomew, at the distance of five leagues from her home. Before she had ridden half way, she begged to be allowed to walk the remainder, but on arriving at the chapel of the Saint she found herself suddenly paralyzed all over. She was placed before the altar, and after a short prayer to God, through the intercession of His Apostle, she was suddenly and entirely cured. She went home with great joy and confidence, and there found a messenger waiting to tell her that the convent was now ready to receive her.

But her brothers kept up their opposition for more than a year after this time. She could do nothing but pray and practise good works for their conversion. She had Mass said for this intention for a whole year. In the course of this time she was visited by some nuns of the Order of St. Jerome, who were on their way to make a foundation at Talavera. Her brothers begged these religious to try to persuade her to join their convent. Anything

seemed to them better than the poor convent at Avila. But Anne stood firm. The nuns soon found out the many graces with which she had been adorned, and were very desirous indeed to gain her. But her faithfulness to her first vocation triumphed. At last, after frequent messages from the Convent of St. Joseph, the brothers found themselves forced to promise that they would bring her at the feast of All Saints next. Anne was overjoyed, but she had yet a last battle to fight. One day she said something about her journey, and this so enraged one of her brothers, that he drew his sword on her and would have killed her then and there but for the courage of one of her sisters, who threw herself between them. Anne was willing enough to die, and quite unmoved by the attack. Then the whole family took part against her. They bade her leave the house and never reappear to trouble them. She spent the night in a cellar, and in the morning betook herself to the church, where the curate heard her confession and gave her Holy Communion. But she would not receive Communion till she had gone and thrown herself at the feet of her brothers to ask their pardon. As she was making her thanksgiving after her Communion, the brother who had attempted to kill her came into the church, pale and full of terror, but instead of repeating the outrage of the evening before, he told her now that all was ready for her journey. The brothers went with her, weeping and groaning. She herself went on gaily and recollected outwardly, but God permitted her to be tried during those last few hours by a severe interior temptation,

in which she had all the alarming side of the enterprise on which she was engaged represented to her most forcibly, and, though her courage did not fail, she scarcely knew what she was doing when she reached the door of St. Joseph's. There at last all her troubles vanished, and she found herself inundated by a calm and deep peace. We shall hear more by and by of this heroic soul, Anne of St. Bartholomew. She probably took the name of the Apostle in gratitude for her miraculous cure at his shrine.

We may as well say a few words concerning the cousin and companion of Anne of St. Bartholomew, who, though not so famous as the last-named religious, became, like her, a Carmelite lay-sister, and was always remarkable for her beautiful faithfulness to her vocation. She entered the Order at Avila, taking the name of Francisca of Jesus, but was soon transferred by St. Teresa's orders to the Convent of Medina del Campo. She struck the religious at once by her appearance of consummate virtue. Mortification, obedience, poverty, and observance of the Rule in every detail were her conspicuous virtues. In reward for this great faithfulness, our Lord granted her an extreme purity of soul, and used to admonish her in prayer as to her slightest imperfections that she might correct them. She was tried by great bodily sufferings, and for many years had a severe pain in her shoulder at the place where our Lord suffered so much from the burthen of His Cross. She died, after a long life of penance, at Medina, and was almost canonized in the common opinion of the inhabitants. She was alive when the depositions

were taken in various places concerning the virtues of St. Teresa, and has recorded one characteristic anecdote of the Saint. It relates to the moment, mentioned in the last chapter, when St. Teresa was sent by the Apostolic Visitor, Father Pedro Hernandez, to take the heavy charge of the priorate at the Convent of the Incarnation. Francis of Jesus was then one of the novices at Medina del Campo. She tells us how the Visitor told St. Teresa, in Chapter where the nuns were assembled, that she must leave the Chapter, for she was now Prioress of the Incarnation of Avila, and no longer Superior in that house of Medina. "At this she was much afflicted, and went out of the Chapter with the novices, among whom I was, and seeing her so afflicted and sad I stayed with her, and then she presently threw herself into my arms, calling out to God our Lord in this manner: 'Lord God of my heart and of my soul! here I am, I am Thine; the weak flesh feels this, but the spirit is ready—*fiat voluntas tua.*' And with that she remained in a rapture in my arms, her face becoming so inflamed and most lovely, that our Lord, Who was within her soul, seemed to be manifest to outward eye therein. And when she came to herself, she said: 'O my child, what a weakness of heart I have! bring me a draught of water.' And then, a few days after, she went to discharge the office imposed upon her."

Anne of St. Bartholomew must have entered the Convent of Avila just at the time of the beginning of the foundation of Salamanca, of which mention has already been made. It was on All Souls' day

that she entered her convent. We know that a part of the same year was spent by Teresa at Toledo. It was either at Toledo or Salamanca, on the 15th of July of that year, 1570, that she had her famous vision of the martyrdom of forty members of the Society of Jesus in the Atlantic Ocean, not far from the Canary Islands. These are the martyrs whose feast is celebrated in the Society on the 15th of July. Their leader was the famous Ignatius of Azevedo, who was on his return to Brazil with this large band of priests, scholastics, and lay-brothers, to supply the spiritual needs of that infant mission. The vessel in which they were sailing was attacked by a Calvinist cruiser, commanded by a certain James Soria, with a commission from the Huguenot leader, Coligny, and, on the surrender of the Portuguese ship, this fanatic put them all to death simply for being Jesuits. One of the martyrs was a cousin of St. Teresa's, Francisco Perez Godoy, whose virtue is highly spoken of in Father de la Puente's *Life of Father Balthasar Alvarez*. ✕ Francisco was, like Father Luis de la Puente himself, a novice of Father Balthasar's, and on this account, perhaps, St. Teresa imparted the vision which she had seen to the last-named Father, long before the news of what had happened reached Spain. ✕

It was at Toledo also that Providence brought about the vocation to the new Carmel of another very famous lady, whose name was to be as renowned in its annals as that of Anne of St. Bartholomew herself. At Toledo Teresa had fallen in with Father Rodriguez, of the Society of Jesus, who had been

charmed, as all were charmed, by his intercourse with her. He had written about her and her foundations to a penitent of his own at Placentia, a certain Anne de Lobeira, and it is of her that we are now to speak. Her vocation shows us another phase of the religious character of so many of the Spanish families of that time. Anne was born in 1545, at Medina del Campo, of parents of good birth but not very large fortune. She had one brother, who entered the Society of Jesus when she was of the age of ten, and those two made up the whole family. Her father had died when she was an infant, and her mother when she was ten years of age. Anne had been born deaf and dumb, but she recovered or rather received the perfect use of her senses on being taken on pilgrimage to the Church of Our Lady del Puerto, a church which it is said some ancestors of her own had built. She spent her earliest years, after the death of her mother, in the house of her maternal grandmother, who brought her up well and piously. This did not prevent the old lady from endeavouring to find a suitable match for her grandchild as soon as she was of marriageable age, that is, as soon as she was fifteen. But Anne had other views. She had bitterly felt the departure from home of her only and much loved brother, Don Christoval, but she had gone quietly into the oratory of the house, and prayed for consolation, and then this child of ten had received a wonderful illumination as to the blessedness of the choice which her brother had made. He was only five years older than Anne. She took on the spot

the resolution to follow him, and consecrate her virginity to God by vow. Her grandmother told her that she could not make such a vow without her own leave, and that she should refuse it. But Anne replied that she intended to go on renewing it until the moment when she was of sufficient age to be perfectly free in the matter.

At the age of fifteen, Anne was already beautiful, clever, bright, quick, full of spirit, and most attractive. As her grandmother would not desist from her attempts to find her a husband, Anne determined to leave her and take up her abode with an uncle at Placentia. He had two daughters, one of about her own age. But, as sometimes happens, the world presented itself to her in more attractive colours after the effort she had made to deliver herself from its importunities. She was much admired at Placentia, and the admiration made some impression on her heart. The sudden death of a friend of her own age and sex produced a great reaction. Once more she was convinced of the nothingness of all earthly things. She had spent nearly a year in greater self-indulgence and vanity than before, and had even, it seems, entertained, or thought of entertaining, some proposals of marriage. Now all was to be changed. She had as yet no director to guide her, and she resolved to break with the world in a way which would leave her no chance of retreat. She assumed the habit of a *beata*—that is, of a lady consecrated to God and His service though living in the world. She appeared accordingly in this habit in church, and, on returning to her uncle's house, cut



off her abundant and beautiful hair. She then gave herself up to works of charity and mortification, renewed her vow of virginity, and also promised God to serve Him in the most austere and perfect Order she could find. She also bound herself never to dwell on any voluntary satisfaction, internal or external.

A year after this, Father Rodriguez came to Placentia, and, after hearing his first sermon, Anne determined to place herself entirely under his direction. She begged him to exterminate in her whatever he saw to be opposed to grace. He directed her for nine or ten years, we are told, and did not spare her contradictions and humiliations. She lived a very austere life, and spent much time in visiting the hospitals. Her director put her under obedience to her elder cousin, who was also his penitent, and who received from him instructions to mortify and humble her even in public. On one occasion, when she had done this with great severity, Anne felt great interior repugnance to submission, but she overcame herself by a great and generous effort. On this our Lord appeared to her, for the first time, and in great beauty, filling her with consolation, and leaving her with a great love for crosses and humiliations.

After this she was assailed by violent temptations from the enemy of souls. She was sometimes so frightened by him that she begged her cousin to come and sleep with her. In her ardour for suffering, she once, at this time, made a prayer to our Lord that she might have some share in His Cross, to make up for the delay in the consummation of her sacrifice. But her prayer was heard in a manner so far beyond

her expectation, that she fell into a state of suffering so severe that it hardly left her alive. The doctors bled her mercilessly three-and-twenty times, and she received the last sacraments. The writer whom we are following tells us that there was a treatment in fashion in such cases, so severe that it was called the "Spanish despatch," as, if it did not cure, it was sure to kill. This was tried upon Anne, but happily she survived it. She then began to pray for at least one year of health, to be a religious, and just at that time her great support was taken away from her by the removal of her confessor to Toledo. The sequel of the story of her vocation may easily be guessed. At Toledo Father Rodriguez, as has been said, fell in with St. Teresa, and he soon wrote to Anne to tell her that he had at last found a nun whose foundations would suit her. Anne was to get well fast, that she might join Teresa as soon as possible. St. Teresa seems to have had a prophetic instinct as to the great part which the new postulant was to play in the propagation of the Reform. She said in a letter to her that she would regard her less as a novice and subject than as a companion, and that they would be two together in the same Order, words which rather alarmed the humility of Anne de Lobeira. Thus she answered the letters from Father Rodriguez and Teresa somewhat coldly. But the good Father soon removed the scruples which had made her afraid of being too prominent in a community which was in its infancy. St. Teresa wrote again, after conferring with Father Rodriguez, and this time there was nothing in the letter to frighten her correspondent.

Anne chose the Convent of Avila, as being at a considerable distance from her family, and fixed her departure for the feast of her patroness, St. Anne, July 26th.

She was not to leave what had so long been her home without a final battle with herself. The whole town regarded her as an ornament and treasure, and the grief of her friends at losing her was very touching. At the same time there came back the usual fears which accompany such a sacrifice, and these were enhanced by her reflections on the infant and uncertain state of the Reform. But our Lord consoled her wonderfully, and gave her great assurances that she was following His will. When the moment for leaving approached, she was not to be found. She was in a prayer of deep recollection in the oratory, and had forgotten the hour fixed for her departure. Her countenance was radiant with heavenly joy and courage. Her two cousins were afraid to disturb her. At last one called her by her name, and then she rose from her knees with her face full of happiness. The two girls looked on her as a mother. She told the elder of them that she would soon follow her, and the youngest, that God would soon provide for her in the world. The youngest married soon after, and the eldest became a Carmelite nun. Anne de Lobeira reached Avila on the 1st of August, and entered the community immediately, receiving the habit at once. Three months after her entrance, St. Teresa sent for her, with two other novices, for the foundation of Salamanca, and arranged that she should have an interview on the

journey with St. John of the Cross. It seems that she still had some fears about the novelty of the Reform, but the Saint reassured her. St. Teresa took care to keep her always with herself, and endeavoured to fill her with the true spirit of the Reform. When she had to leave Salamanca for the foundation of Alba de Tormes, she left Anne of Jesus, as she was now called, in the responsible post of Mistress of the Novices. Anne began at once to form them to the very highest perfection. She was once asked how it was she did this, and she replied, in words worthy of Teresa herself, "That she tried to make them walk on, each by the way in which God led her, studying it herself, that she might not turn any one away from it, but only aid them to get rid of the obstacles which she saw in them to the grace and designs of God, without delaying His work or mixing with it work of her own." We may leave this heroic soul for the present at the Convent of Salamanca.

We have already said that the foundation of the Convent of Alba de Tormes and the appointment of St. Teresa to the government of the Convent of the Incarnation at Avila, furnished a point in her history at which the narrative may naturally pause. Her most famous biographer, Father Ribera, ends the second of the three books which he devotes to the relation of her life at this point. We may well imitate him in the conclusion which he subjoins to this part of his work, in which he gives an account of the method pursued by St. Teresa in the journeys which the foundations of her convents made necessary. It is easy to believe, as he tells us, that Teresa

would far more gladly have spent her time in quiet and recollected prayer in her own Convent of St. Joseph. But the repugnance which she so naturally felt to the turmoil and distraction of her travels was sure to yield, in a soul like hers, to the zeal she would feel for the glory of God, which was so greatly advanced by the foundations, and also to the commands of her Superiors and the constant prompting and urging which she received from our Lord in prayer. But it is natural also that we should find that she took the greatest pains to regulate her journeys in such a manner, as to avoid, as far as was possible, the distraction and dissipation incidental to such occupations.

She chose for her companions such nuns as desired to come with her for the foundations, unless there was some imperative necessity for the selection of others. She made them all feel that she was grateful to them for their readiness to follow her. All went to Communion on the day of departure. The journey was always made, if possible, in litters or closed coaches, and it is said that she had herself once met with some rudeness when she had travelled otherwise. She made a point of giving the impression everywhere that her nuns were people of quality, who were to be treated with consideration on their road. As soon as the journey had begun, all were to behave as if in the convent itself. They were never to lift their veils where any one could see their faces. She herself always spoke, even to women, with her veil down, unless there was some strong reason to the contrary. There was always a bell

that the times of silence and prayer might be observed. An hour-glass was taken, to measure the time accurately. When the bell had rung for silence, it was observed by all the company, not only by Teresa and her nuns, but by the priests and seculars, and even the servants who accompanied them. These servants were glad enough, Ribera says, when the time for silence was over, and Teresa rewarded them, if they had kept it well, by some little treat when they reached the inn at which they were to pass the night. Every litter or carriage in which the nuns were, if she herself was not in it, had a designated Superior, both for the observance of obedience, and also, Ribera says, that she might see how far those whom she chose for this little exercise of authority were fit to govern.

When the party reached their inn, Teresa hired an apartment in which they might all be enclosed together, and a portress was appointed who alone held all communications with people outside, and through whose hands everything had to pass. If there was no such apartment to be had, Teresa insisted at least on a separation being made by means of hangings, or coverlets, so that her nuns might be quite to themselves. She herself was the first to rise in the morning to call the others, and the last to go to rest at night. They always had a priest with them, who heard their confessions and said Mass for them in the morning, unless this was impossible. Teresa always went to Communion at his Mass. She always had holy water with her, and often an image of the Holy Infant, which she carried in her lap.

Thus her journeys were no distractions to her. She was continually conversing with God, she had a very special gift of the Divine presence, and she was often visited at these times by very great consolations. These might well have made her wish never to talk with others, but when the time came, she did this with immense joy, as if she had desired nothing better, and her conversation was so sweet and delightful to her companions that they were filled with peace and heavenly gladness. The common incidents of the journey were turned by her, in a gracious and happy manner, to subjects of spiritual consolation, and the very drivers and muleteers, some of whom were rude men, accustomed to swear and blaspheme, could do nothing of the kind in her presence, and often said that they preferred to any pleasure in the world that they had ever enjoyed, that of hearing Mother Teresa speak to them about God.





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